

Satyananda Yoga in Italy

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Inspiration – Italian Tours (1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984)

Development – Satyananda Yoga in Italy (1980–2009)

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In humility
we offer this dedication to
Swamí Sivananda Saraswatí,
who inspired, guided and initiated
Swamí Satyananda Saraswatí
into the secrets of yoga.



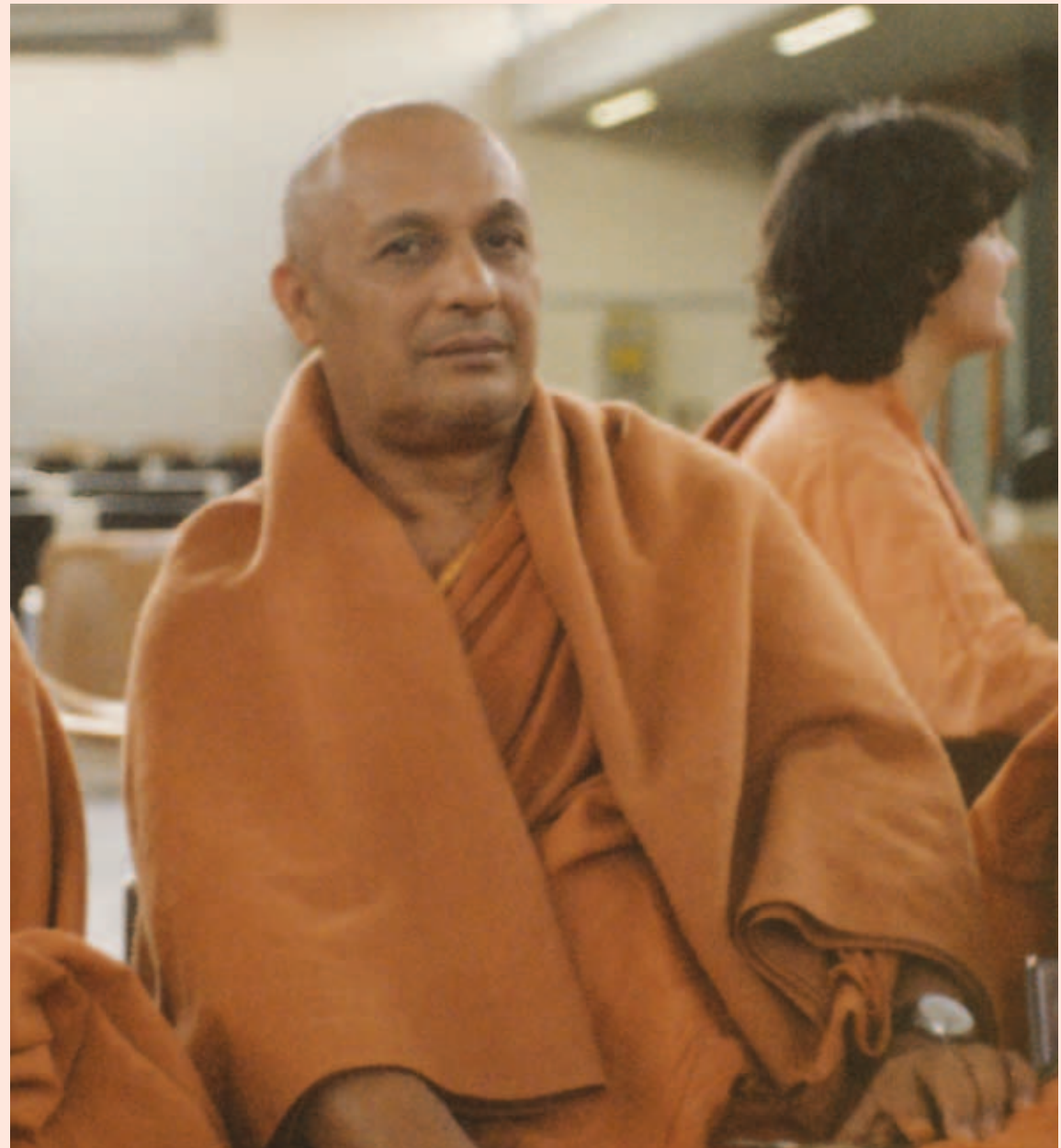


Foundation

In April 1980, Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati arrived at Rome Airport to sow the seeds of yoga in Italy. He was welcomed to the country as the guest of honour for a three-day seminar and was received by a delegation of the Italian Yoga Federation. This event was the foundation of Satyananda Yoga in Italy.

The historic seminar was held in Numana, a famous beach resort in the Adriatic Sea. Paramahamsaji was accompanied by swamis and members of the federation on the picturesque drive to Numana from Rome. At the seminar, over four hundred people crowded the hall, eager to hear the words of the radiant yogi from India wearing 'orange robes and wooden shoes'. He gave lectures and satsangs on a vast range of subjects such as mantra, hatha yoga, meditation, yoga nidra, tantra and sadhana, and the people of Italy received a completely new perspective on yoga. Many of the practices, such as yoga nidra, were received and practised by Italian aspirants for the first time. In fact, the meeting stirred great interest throughout the country.

After the seminar was over, Paramahamsaji travelled back to Rome. Here, during satsang at a private house, he revealed the practice of ajapa japa to Italians, giving clear and deep explanations followed by a group practice. He also visited the Santa Chiara Church where he spoke to the entire church gathering. The next day he left for India, but we had a feeling he'd be back . . . soon.



Impressions...

In gratefulness

Swami Anandananda Saraswati

I met Swami Satyananda on 14th May 1979 in Australia where I received mantra diksha and spiritual name from him. That visit is still a vivid memory. I entered the room where Paramahamsaji was seated, to the right a fireplace was blazing. I sat in front of him and my mind went blank; all the questions I had, all the rational thinking, the sense of time, was gone. There was just him. Paramahamsaji patiently waited till I found my mala and remembered what I had to ask him. I left with the knowledge in my heart that I had found all I was looking for: a guru and a purpose in life.

That brought me to Munger and the Bihar School of Yoga, where I could see Paramahamsaji every day and come in closer contact with his mission: to bring yoga in the life of everyone, with comprehensible scientific explanations and easy access, applicable in many areas of society.

When leaving Munger in 1980, Paramahamsaji told me, "I'm coming to Italy this year. I will see you there." When Paramahamsaji did arrive in Italy, I found the courage to ask him for a sadhana. He looked at me with a smile and said, "First you work very hard then think about a sadhana."

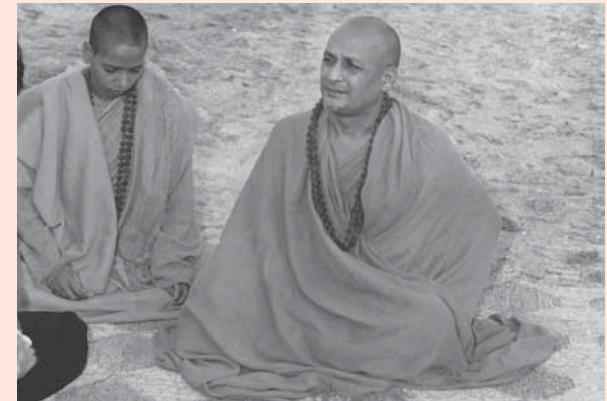
In those years, Paramahamsaji came to Europe and Italy several times. On one occasion when Paramahamsaji was due to come, for some strange reason I had decided to fast till he arrived. Somebody informed him about

it. When we met in his hotel room, some disciples had brought a suitcase full of Indian food. Paramahamsaji had the suitcase opened and began to distribute food to all. When my turn came he kept dishing out large amounts and said, "Ananda, eat it all, then I'll give you more." I ate to the point I was nearly exploding. When lunch was over, another person arrived and Paramahamsaji enquired if he had lunch. He had not, so Paramahamsaji said, "Ananda, take him to a good restaurant for lunch." Then to the guest he said, "Make him eat whatever you eat." And I did, resolving never to fast on such occasions!

On another instance, I was thinking about renouncing coffee which I liked very much and switch over to tea. Paramahamsaji was meeting some guests and I was seated in a corner. He was talking in Hindi and suddenly he turned to me and said, "Ananda, tea or coffee is the same." And then he continued to speak in Hindi. I was amazed, he knew exactly what was on my mind and with that sentence he made me realize the limitation of my mind and the vastness of his awareness.

I am grateful to God to have had the opportunity in my life to see the development and growth of Swami Satyananda's mission from the original smaller ashram to Ganga Darshan, an oasis of beauty and perfection dedicated to yoga and spiritual life.

I am grateful to have been a witness of Paramahamsaji's detachment when he left Munger and passed Ganga Darshan on to Swami Niranjan. I am grateful to have seen the steady and gradual development of the ashram at Rikhia, to have seen what Paramahamsaji did and is still doing for the villagers and, most of all, for the children, the kanyas and batuks. He had everything planned in advance, for



he had the capacity to have a vision of the future. One of his sentences that has always inspired me is, "The sun always rises at the horizon." Each time I left Munger or Rikhia it was always with a new boost of inspiration, enthusiasm and optimism, and the heart full and light.

I am grateful to the higher forces to have met a living example of a sannyasin totally dedicated to his guru, his mission and to the upliftment of humanity. I am grateful to have learned and understood yoga from Swami Satyananda, through his books and through his satsangs which are an immense treasure for humanity.

The vastness of his knowledge, brought to us in a practical, systematic and scientific way, is a source of encouragement and inspiration, acting as a flame of light giving us direction in life.

There are no appropriate words to describe my feelings for Paramahamsaji. All I can say is that the feeling is unique as he was a unique being, a unique man, sannyasin, teacher, explorer of life and spirit, a unique guru. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you Paramahamsaji.

A homage to the greatly-loved Paramahansa Satyananda

Antonio Nuzzo

Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati dedicated every moment of his life to learning, teaching and spreading of yoga. He imparted knowledge in every way possible and without rest.

Reserved and far from worldly life, he would not spend a moment of his time in mundane pleasures. During his travels he avoided unnecessary chatting with people he met and showed no interest at all in tourist attractions. He was permanently centred on his inner life, concentrating on his work and dedicated to the end he had set himself, which was to continue the intent of Swami Sivananda to whom he was profoundly devoted.

As the times of the yogi dwelling in caves was now over, he believed that the science of yoga handed down for thousands of years to ascetics should be opened to all. He regarded the passing on of knowledge as a duty. He was firm in his belief that the keeping of knowledge and experience to oneself is nothing other than proof of egoism. He worked extensively, contributing to the teaching of students, the training of teachers and the preparing of swamis.

Swami Satyananda also transmitted his teaching widely through books of notable pedagogical value revealing knowledge and techniques traditionally held secret. Acting under the profound inspiration of Swami Sivananda, it was as though he had decided to open an enormous casket of precious jewels that had been cherished zealously for thousands of years. He was

bestowing them to humanity to enrich and transform all those sensitive to their value and inclined to spiritual research.

The European Union of the National Federations of Yoga had been meeting since 1973 and I first met Paramahamsaji at their yearly meeting of September 1975 in Zinal (Switzerland). Nearly a thousand people from various European countries participated. I saw Swami Satyananda for the first time at a conference in the auditorium. He was surrounded by other swamis who had been initiated by him and had come to introduce a generally unknown theme that awakened great interest: tantra.

I immediately felt his great cultural, experiential and spiritual qualities. The man I had in front of me was an innovator who had rescued from oblivion, renewed and adapted to contemporary life the vast and precious teaching of tantra. The spread of yoga in the latter part of the twentieth century in the western world is to be mostly attributed to great masters such as Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and his direct disciples who adeptly conveyed the teaching of yoga with tenacity and dedication. Swami Satyananda distinguished himself among them by his determination which saw him through the immensity of his task and which was fully perceivable.

In July 1978, the European Union of Yoga organized a visit to India to study and experience kriya yoga at the ashram in Munger. Fifty teachers of yoga from around Europe responded to the initiative and I certainly could not resist the opportunity. Our group left Paris for Delhi and then on to Patna, finally reaching Munger after a five-hour car journey. We felt as though we had reached

the most isolated place on the Indian subcontinent. The members of the ashram greeted us warmly and we began the learning of those thousand-year-old techniques. Towards evening during satsangs, Swami Satyananda would answer the group's questions.

Every one of us had wished to live under the guidance of an authentic guru and there we found a sincere researcher, a testimony of thousands of years of spirituality upholding the deepest tradition and a lucid mind able to explain complexity with simplicity, methodically unfolding seemingly limitless knowledge. He shed light on the fundamental teachings from the most ancient tradition, interpreting them with contemporary examples from the immense world of science, neurophysiology, biochemistry, psychology, etc.

During our stay in the ashram, we were involved in long practices of meditation. In the morning we practised hatha yoga, then yoga nidra and pranayama. Finally, as the day drew to an end, we sang kirtan. During the sessions of kriya yoga I had incredible sensations, my body seemed to expand filling the whole room, until I felt the room was closing in on me and I felt afraid and breathless, but I remained motionless. Suddenly I became aware of everything that was going on behind me and out of the room. I asked to speak to Swami Satyananda who reassured me that it had been a normal psychic experience which should be completely ignored, I should just let things happen. On that occasion, Paramahamsaji blessed me with the spiritual name Advaita which I still cherish in my heart as a sankalpa and which nurtures my profound aspiration.

In 1979, I was president of the Yoga Federation and decided to organize a meeting with the participation of Swami Satyananda. However, he had a very tight agenda and proposed sending Swami Niranjanananda in his place assuring me that he would make every effort to be personally present the following year.

In September 1979, we hosted the still very young Swami Niranjan, who gave us a taste of what was to come the following year. In May 1980, I had the privilege of greeting the master himself at the airport of Fiumicino in Rome and escorting him to Numana (Italy) where the meeting was to take place. The response to the event was even greater than we could have ever imagined. We had expected around three hundred people and found that more than double that number were waiting for us. The meeting stirred great interest throughout the country. Many different themes concerning tantra, the yoga of Patanjali and karma yoga were addressed. As always, Paramahamsaji fully employed his time in conferences, meetings and satsang.

He gave proof of his great humanity and extraordinary intelligence revealing a complete awareness and permanent vigilance, which he knew how to put to humanity's benefit, showing himself to be more than a worthy disciple of the great master Swami Sivananda. It is my heartfelt belief, that there are many adepts of yoga in Italy thanks to this great master who has bestowed the wonderful discipline of yoga upon us nurturing our hearts and lives. We are fully aware of having been entrusted not only with a spiritual heritage, but also with an immense duty which requires the same unwavering determination as his.



To Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Sn. Chandrakalananda

Beloved Swami, you played a funny joke! You made me enter into your world, I told you I was stubborn, and that you “couldn’t extract a spider from a hole” with me.

But no, you persisted in planting the seed. I am one of your seeds just born in the garden, and I started to grow roots and develop. You attended to me. Why? All this has aroused a lot of noise in me.

I feel myself as raw material which is transformed as in an illusion game, and perhaps under the eccentric appearances it is possible to glimpse your work.

After we met in 1979, some newspapers wrote that your arrival in Italy had the purpose “to throw a bridge between the East and the West through yoga.”

I followed your instructions and attracted by the scientific aspect of this philosophy became a yoga teacher, but I learned that yoga is a powerful tool for our personal evolution and that teachers have an important role in people’s physical and spiritual development.

In the yoga tradition, science and discipline coexist, tools that I have always understood exclusively through reason, but then I learned that it is not possible to continue a process of personal transformation only through the intellect.

The deepest human nature is spiritual, and the practice of yoga contributed to the evolution of my awareness. I realized that yoga was not my profession, but the tool to expand my consciousness and improve myself.

After I met you, I accepted this slow, thorny and gradual process of transformation of my personality and felt the need of a guru to help me on this path. When I asked to be initiated into karma sannyasa, you said “Yes”! I cried tears of relief, but also became aware of a great responsibility that came with our bond – unique, untouchable, simple and deeply personal.

It has been the most beautiful choice in my life. I have chosen not to live in an ashram, but I try to bring its spirit into my daily life, and when it is possible I go to India, to Rikhia or Munger, to draw energy to sustain my life as a karma sannyasin, which I try to live with sincerity and fairness.

It is due to devotion to you, Paramahamsaji, and on your recommendation, that I teach yoga, and I am trying to offer service through a tangible expression.

In all this time, we met several times, though not enough for me, and in each meeting and even every time I think of you, my heart is pounding and I feel my enthusiasm rising up. I would’ve liked to tell you all this, but I didn’t dare.

Swami Satyananda, when you came to Italy, Swamis Amritananda and Yogamudrananda were always beside you, conveying in this way the value you give to women. You often spoke on this topic during the meetings, highlighting the spiritual attitude women have towards evolution of consciousness whether they are wives, sisters or disciples.

I remember the many subjects you discussed during your visits to Italy. I especially remember the emphasis with which you treated the topic of stress-related disorders, and I remember too, the amazing effect that

you had on people when you spoke about the necessity to have discipline.

The scientific research that you have conducted on yoga therapy has stimulated my intellect as well as my heart. I devoted myself with deep interest and passion to studying the applications of yoga in the treatment of diseases. This knowledge allowed me to integrate and improve my therapeutic approach with patients during a job in a hospital. Later you introduced us to the practices of kriya yoga and my discipline, in the attempt to practise this sadhana, has been constantly tested.

The topics that you dealt with had a deep impact on my head and in my heart, as on the heads and in the hearts of all the other people who had the privilege to meet and hear you. How many times did I see open mouths and shiny eyes on those who were listening while you spoke! You looked at everyone in the eye, and while you talked, sometimes your words came with an innocent smile. However, the more important example that you gave to us is that you chose to act instead of merely talking.

Paramahamsaji, you taught us spirituality through yoga, and you have shown us the way by your life, your words, your actions and through your sannyasa. I don’t know if it’s possible to say I love you as my very own guru, but surely I cannot help saying . . . thank you.



With gratitude and appreciation

Swami Shaktidhara Saraswati

Retracing the past time it clearly appears how, for many of us, having met you has happened, in fact, before meeting you in person. Your being had already reached us through the wisdom of the words in your books, through the people who had already met you and before then through the desire and the need of the presence of a guru in life, which by a favourable concurrence of events was realized through you.

You were here before we encountered you and you still are; your presence is certainly not limited by the existence of a physical body. In the same way, you already existed in my heart before I met you, and you still continue to exist within me. This is your greatness. Your existence is not conditioned or limited by time, space and object. Your existence vibrates, pulsates, imperishably and uninterruptedly. Past, present and future have transformed and woven into each other until the moment of the encounter with you.

Thank you for the experiences you allowed us to have. Thank you for the opportunities you gave us, to dedicate our life to a higher purpose, transforming, in its essence, the daily routine in spirituality; transforming, through your energy, our energy, in order to channelize it towards a spiritual intent, in the form of yoga.

The years have gone by, accompanied by the succession of the yajnas, consecrated by the grace of your presence. A slow transformation has taken place in the soul of the participants. At the beginning, as soon as you would appear, uproar, murmur and commotion would rise; gradually your arrival would be accompanied by a respectful silence and calm. The same silence, peace and calm you emanated with your slight gait, almost skimming along the floor, walking among the participants and gifting them your spiritual



embrace wrapped in a simple wave of greeting or by doing parikrama around the mandapa, offering in humble pranam your homage to the evoked divinity.

Your life in this world has been exemplary, as exemplary as has been your parting from the mundane world, plain, with no clamour, no protraction.

However, the technological time is on our side. Your presence in our being, your memory, your words, your smiles, your gestures, your glances embedded as precious moments, can be reinforced and supported by having you still with us not only in our hearts, but also in the photos, recordings and videos. They will reach, as a flow of heady nectar, future generations who will perhaps meet you in your “new model”.

Meeting and seeing you arrive has always been a deep emotion. And always, as I’d see you leave, the feeling would not be of separation and distance, but the call would be perceptible, the attraction of your energy compelling. Your energy has drawn thousands of people to your Self, offering a reassuring glow, a horizon of light on the path of many souls who would otherwise grope in darkness and doubt.

These thoughts, these words are only small fragments to remember your incommensurable greatness and I devote them to you from the bottom of my heart with gratitude and appreciation.





Swami Satyananda in Italy
1981

1981

Paramahamsaji returned to Italy on 31st March 1981 to preside over two seminars, one in Milano and the other in the mountains near Torino.

On 1st and 2nd April, Paramahamsaji presided over a seminar on 'Tantra and Meditation' held at the Hotel Michelangelo in Milano organized by Swami Om Murti. Paramahamsaji dealt with the subjects in his clear, classical and scientific way, which all present absorbed with great interest. Never before had such a presentation been given to aspirants in Italy! On the last day of the program, Paramahamsaji initiated many aspirants into mantra.

Paramahamsaji left Milano and travelled by car to Torino to preside over another seminar organized by Swami Anandananda. The seminar was held in the Hotel Atlantic, filled to capacity by aspirants and yoga teachers come from Torino and all over Italy to meet and hear the great master.

'Yoga as it is Today' was the main subject of the seminar and Paramahamsaji spoke on several aspects of yoga ranging from applied yoga for treatment of different ailments, scientific research, mantra and spiritual life.

On the concluding day of the seminar, Paramahamsaji initiated several aspirants into mantra. On the following day, he left for India.



Tantra and Kundalini

Milano, April 1981

Hari Om Tat Sat

In the last few decades many people have begun to question whether or not it is possible to realize their own Self. Of course, one who leads the life of a renunciate may be able to realize the Self more easily, but when we talk about the common man who is facing life and its inevitable tensions, then the question arises, "Can he also realize?" We know how much mental turbulence we face in our everyday life. In spite of our sincerity, we fail to transcend the dissipations of the mind and emotions. It is very pleasant to hear that the Self is within all of us, but when we try to look within, we don't find the Self, we only find the mind.

For a long time we have been taught that in order to experience transcendence, it is necessary to live a different sort of life. In order to experience the higher Self, the present way of life has to be renounced. But is it possible for everybody to lead a different life? Man is a bundle of desires. Can he renounce them? Man lives with emotions, experiences of the past and anticipation of the future. Can he reject them? There are beautiful flowers and music in the world. Can he close his eyes and ears to them? Is renunciation the only way to higher realization?

There is only one science in the world which has given a proper reply to this question. That is the science of tantra. Tantra is completely different from the religious sciences which preach renunciation. It is a practical science which makes everybody capable of looking within himself.

Thousands of years ago, tantra was discovered by the great rishis of India who made an investigation into

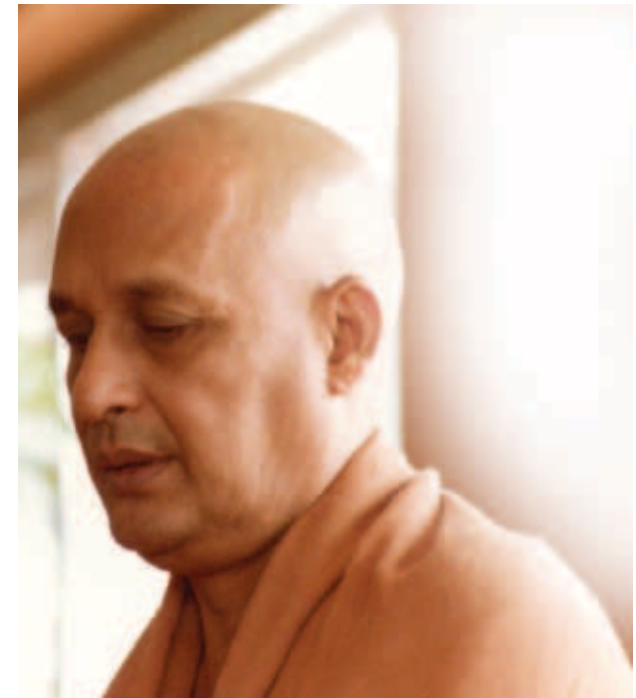
the higher realms of consciousness and discovered how to realize the ultimate substance. This enquiry has been going on for centuries. First comes the question: what is the truth? Everybody has his own definition. Can truth be defined or is it discerned only by experience? Is truth an event or a culmination of man's total experience? Then the second question is: can everybody obtain that experience? Or is it necessary to purify oneself first? And for that purpose, should family life be rejected?

These and other questions the great rishis contemplated and discussed. They came to the conclusion that no matter who you are, if you are sincere, you can realize the truth. This science of evolution became known as tantra.

Tantra is a Sanskrit word composed of two roots: *tanoti* meaning 'expansion' and *trayati* meaning 'liberation'. In tantra, liberation means the release of energy, practically the same meaning as in modern physics. Within the mass of matter lies energy, but the energy is latent and has to be exploded from the bondage of matter. There are certain processes by which you can liberate the energy. When a scientist disintegrates matter, it splits into elements, and ultimately the energy is liberated. To give you another example of what liberation means: milk is turned into curd, and from the curd butter is churned. The butter is liberated from the milk. When an ultimate substance is liberated from the gross, it is called liberation.

In tantra, there are two concepts known as Shiva and Shakti. Shiva represents total awareness, or universal intelligence, and Shakti represents the universal energy. Intelligence and energy are constantly interacting with each other in every speck of creation. When Shiva and Shakti unite, there is perception, cognition. When separation takes place between the two, then liberation occurs.

In the physical body these two forces are known as *prana* or vitality and *chitta* or mind. Chitta controls the



total aspect of awareness, cognition and perception, while *prana* symbolizes life, mobility, action and movement. These forces are conducted through the body by a system of nadis. Within the spinal cord there are two important flows. On the left side, there is the flow of *chitta* through the *ida nadi*, and on the right side the flow of *prana* through the *pingala nadi*. The word *nadi* is a Sanskrit word which means 'flow'. Just as in an electric cable the electrical energy is flowing, in the same manner the two energies are flowing within these two nadis.

The spinal column is not merely a combination of discs and bone. It plays a very important part in our physical existence because it carries the nervous impulses which connect the body with the brain. At the bottom of the spinal cord is the tailbone. Below the tailbone is a small



In the beginning, you practise the mudra and help the energy to express itself. Later, energy begins to express spontaneously and then you automatically practise mudras.

vestigial gland, known as mooladhara chakra, which is the origin of mind and prana. The two channels, ida and pingala, emanate from this particular point and travel up the spinal column to the brain.

The two channels cross each other at different points. The first point of crossing is the sacral plexus. The second point is the solar plexus. The third point is the cardiac plexus. The fourth point is the cervical plexus. Then they unite in the medulla oblongata. These centres, which are known as chakras, are the basis of tantric practices. The first centre at the bottom of the spinal column is

mooladhara chakra. The highest centre in the brain is known as sahasrara chakra. Through the tantric practices, an awakening takes place at mooladhara chakra, which is supposed to be the storehouse of the latent energy in man. The ultimate aim of the different practices of tantra is to create an awakening in this vital centre known as mooladhara.

The latent energy in mooladhara chakra is known as kundalini. You will have to remember this word very well because kundalini is the energy of the future humanity. Awakening of kundalini develops what we call the supermind. The mind we have now is a lower mind. This mind is dependent on the senses and on so many factors. Our little mind is restricted by so many conditions. This mind is not a complete mind. It is nothing but an understanding of the objects that are outside. The mind is limited and incapable. It is not competent because it does not know itself; it does not know the inner being. However, there is a more competent mind, a more capable mental condition. That is going to be the basis for the future culture of humanity. Therefore, man will have to explode his kundalini. You cannot understand the truth by this mind. With this mind you can only think. With this speech you can only talk, but you can never experience atma, the soul or divinity. This mind can never reach that substance.

In order to understand that experience you will have to transform the quality of the mind. You cannot see radioactive waves with the naked eyes; a more sensitive instrument is required. In the same way, the truth has to be experienced by a transcendental instrument.

Whether it is for the awakening of the higher mind or for realization of the higher truth, the quality of consciousness has to be transformed. A blind person can talk about the sun, or beautiful flowers, but he can never

see them. We may talk and read a lot about higher things. You may even fight about it, as people have been doing for centuries, but the experience is not possible unless the supermind or higher mind intervenes.

Therefore, this problem has to be tackled. What is the problem? How to transform the quality of consciousness. How to develop the quality of mind. How to explode the intelligence. This brings us to the awakening of kundalini. Kundalini represents the latent universal consciousness in man. With the awakening of kundalini, expansion of consciousness takes place.

If you want to transform the quality of mind, you will have to expand the consciousness. Ordinarily the mind functions within certain limited areas. If there is a flower in the garden, you can see it and if there is no flower you can't see it. If there is the moon, you can see it and if there is no moon, you can't. If there is a sweet dish, you experience it as sweet and if it is sour you experience it as sour. This means that your ordinary perception is dependent on the sensory capacities. But there is a question. Is experience a completely sensory outcome? Another way of putting the question is: can we experience only through the medium of the senses? Can we see without the eyes, hear without the ears, taste without the tongue? We can, provided we are able to expand the mind.

What is expansion? There is a flower in the garden and you can see it. However, even when you close your eyes you continue to see the flower, just the same. That is expansion. There is no sound in this room; nobody is playing music or singing kirtan, but still you can hear music. That is called expansion of experience. When you sit down quietly in your room and are able to visualize your guru or master, face to face, not merely feeling his presence, but seeing him in the total dimension, that is called expansion of consciousness.

The entire system of tantra is intended to expand the mind and liberate the energy. There are different practices to help you expand the mind and liberate the Shakti. Yoga helps to expand the mind and tantra helps to explode the Shakti. Yoga and tantra should not be understood as separate sciences. You should never say, "I practise yoga, not tantra." In fact, all the practices of yoga are a part of tantra. However, people are frightened and feel ashamed to say that they practise tantra because they want to pose as puritans and cannot face their own guilt.

Not only in the West, but all over the world people are still afraid to say that they practise tantra, so instead they say, "I practise yoga." All the practices of hatha yoga and raja yoga are a part of tantra. Therefore, everyone who teaches yoga in the world actually teaches tantra. However, there are certain practices which are exclusively tantric. They are known as yantra, mantra and mandala. There is also the system of kundalini yoga and the kriyas. *Kriya* means 'inner psychic movement'. Kriya yoga can be practised by every householder. It is a combination of asana, pranayama, mudras and bandhas. There are about twenty-seven practices, but we teach only twenty. In the tantric tradition, these practices push the level of energy from the gross to the subtle.

Through the practices of kriya yoga, you are trying to purify the chakras, and create balance in the pranic system. Usually the two main flows of energy are not harmoniously balanced in the body. These two channels distribute energy to different parts of the body through the chakras. If there is confusion in the chakras, then the distribution of energy will not take place properly. Therefore, the chakras have to be purified.

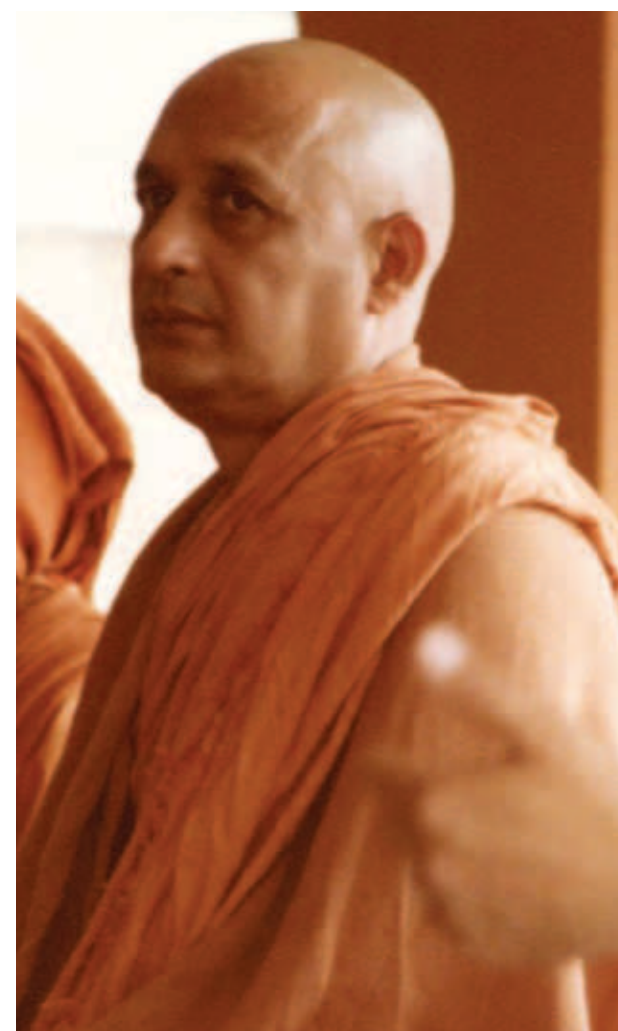
The chakras are very important centres. I will give you a very gross example to explain what I mean by chakras. When electricity is generated, it is brought to a substation

where there are very heavy transformers. From these transformers, it is distributed to the powerhouse and from there it goes to the pole, which distributes it to different homes. Now, if there is confusion in any of these places, one house will get electricity and another house will not. In the same manner, if the chakras and nadis are not purified, then the energy misses the way. Therefore, in tantra it is said that both energies must be harmonized.

How to purify the nadis and chakras? Every chakra is the distributor of prana and awareness to different parts of the body. For instance, the sacral plexus, swadhisthana chakra, is responsible for distributing this energy to the excretory and genital-urinary system. In the same way, the solar plexus, manipura chakra, is the distributing centre of the twin energies to the digestive system. These two energies are distributed to every part of the body.

Existence is a combination of these two energies, physical and mental. Can you imagine your body without prana or mind? If there is no pranic energy, we are dead, and if there is no mental energy we are not aware. These twin energies represent our existence and there must be complete balance and harmony between them. The practices of tantra are very important in bringing about this event. But first, the body has to be purified in order to give complete expression to the energy, through and through. Therefore, certain techniques have to be practised. The asanas which we practise are not physical postures alone. Asanas are necessary to create a mild awakening in the chakras. One movement can control the flow of energy in different parts of the body. Therefore, I define asanas as regulators of energy. Just as you regulate the electrical energy flow in your apartment, in the same way you can regulate the energy in this physical apartment.

The physical body is not merely flesh, bone and marrow. In tantra we understand this body as a miracle



of energy. Each and every action that we perform is an outcome of that Shakti. Therefore, the different pathways of Shakti should be understood. Not only understanding of the pathways, but you should be able to regulate the energy through the pathways. You will discover this in your practice and understand what I am really talking about.



Many people have written books on yoga asanas. They talk about the physical aspect as if they are only used to develop muscles. Asanas are much more than that. They are intended to create a harmonious flow of energy in different pathways in the body. I will give you an example. You build a house and call in the electrician. He does the electrical fittings. Then he takes the different cables from one end to the other and joins them at different points. Wherever he joins the cables, he puts a switch, and wherever he puts a switch he has an opposite point.

There he fixes a bulb. Then you turn on the switch and your apartment is illuminated. These different cables which move within the walls represent pathways of energy. After some years, different kinds of problems occur in these pathways. The electrical cables go rotten. Switches stop working or a short circuit takes place, or the wires are completely disconnected.

What do you do then? First of all, you call in an electrician to get the pathways properly connected. Then you put proper switches. In the same way, first of all asanas should be practised in order to harmonize the pathways. The various asanas which you practise every day for physical purposes are really meant for that specific purpose. Therefore, asanas, which form a part of yoga, are actually a part of tantra.

When you practise kriya yoga, then the awakening begins to take place in different layers. Kriya yoga is a practice that is intended for everyone. It doesn't matter what type of life you lead, what type of food you eat, the practices of kriya yoga give you a push into the inner dimension of consciousness. In the last few years, people all over the world have been practising it with great advantage.

We have to remember one thing very clearly. Closing the eyes and trying to forget ourselves is not meditation. A little bit of tranquillity is also not meditation. If you study the tantras you will be surprised to find that meditation is one of the greatest experiences and events of life.

The word meditation is known as dhyana yoga, *dhyana* means total awareness. It does not mean concentration. When your mind is aware of one thing, not two things, it is meditation. How can you train your mind to be aware of a single object at one time? Usually this doesn't happen. At different levels we are dissipated; we are aware of different experiences. Even if we think of one object on

the mental level, we are aware of another object at the sub-mental level.

Therefore, awareness of one single object at one time is dhyana yoga. However, you cannot force your mind to be one-pointed. If you force the mind to concentrate and meditate, it will develop a split. Therefore, in tantra, the definition is very clear. You cannot practise meditation, it happens. Meditation is becoming; it is a state. If you fulfil the conditions, then meditation arises. Thus, in order to develop those conditions, kriya yoga is practised in such a way that finally the meditation comes.

It is not easy to give you a total glimpse of tantra at this stage, but one thing has to be remembered at every point of practice: wherever and whoever you are, irrespective of your religious, ethical or social status, you must start moving on this greater path. The experience is within us, and all the necessary material is already within us. The awakening can take place and has to take place within us. This awakening which is the ultimate purpose of tantra is the awakening of our own being. Just as you sow a seed and the seed splits, germinates and sprouts, in the same way the seed of consciousness has to be sprouted. Man's mind and consciousness are not static. Experience is never a static event. Experiences are eternal and they keep moving. We are at a phase of life where we have to make a transition from limitation to transcendence.

One of the reasons for the suffering of man is the mind. Suffering is the incapacity of the mind to experience happiness. The mind has not evolved to a point where it can experience happiness. Many times I have been asked the question: "Why is man unhappy? Why is he suffering?" I say, "Because he can't experience happiness." Experience of happiness is a higher mental capacity.

It is definitely a capacity which man has not cultivated yet. Once you cultivate this capacity to experience

happiness, then where is the suffering? Therefore, the stuff we are concerned with now is the mind. Mind is also matter; it is a mass of consciousness. You have to break it. You have to disintegrate it, because the mind is not homogeneous. Mind is a composition, a combination, just as this house is a combination. You have bricks, mortar, wood, so many things. The totality of the materials is called the house. Mind is not one substance. It is a combination of elements.

If you consider mind as matter, you will have to break it into elements. Just as in physics we give the definition of matter as a composition of more than ninety-six elements, the definition of mind is a composition of twenty-four or more elements. Therefore, every experience, every form of awareness has to be separated.

The separation takes place in meditation. Every experience that swells up from the bottom of the subconscious has to be separated. Every experience is an expression of matter. This is important. If you move with this hypothesis, then the thing is solved. Therefore, when you are trying to disintegrate the mind you are going to have many, many experiences. All these experiences are expressions of matter.

It is important to know that the explosion of mind is one of the greatest events of life. When the mind is blown, all objective experiences are withdrawn. At that time, awakening of kundalini takes place. This is the ultimate subject matter of tantra.

Now, coming to a more practical point. Many people think that tantra is a science or a practice advocating



self-indulgence, but I don't believe in this. I believe in the sincerity of man. I know that man is trying his level best to overcome the gross concepts of life. At the same time, he is where he is. Therefore, accepting the act of maithuna in one's personal life, it must be properly understood that the path of self-indulgence is far from tantra.

It is true that many times we are going to strike the final idea. Man has been trying to discover something more than what he can understand and experience. This is the real tantra.

Hari Om Tat Sat

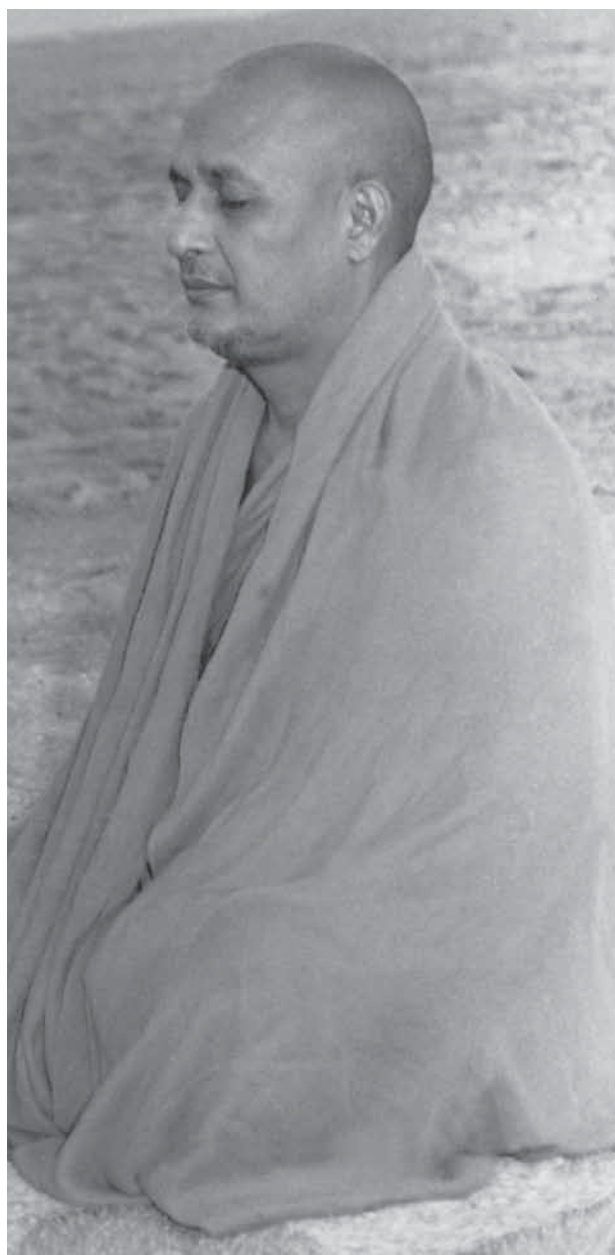
On Swami Sivananda

Milano, April 1981

Q. Is there any event of Paramahamsaji's life with his guru, referring to meditation, which for our pleasure in learning he would tell us about?

Paramahamsaji: You know that my guru was Swami Sivananda. This year in Zinal we are celebrating his birthday, on behalf of all the yoga teachers in Europe. The European Union of National Yoga Federations will sponsor these celebrations. I will be the chief speaker for all the four days, speaking on his life, his philosophy, his teachings and his vision. It is of course very natural for me to tell you that you should not miss that opportunity – only for two reasons, because you like to see me and I like to see you. When two people love each other, they like to see each other every now and then. Of course, our love belongs to another level of evolution; still, we are human beings.

When I met Swami Sivananda in 1943, I was already on the path. My problem was not samadhi. In fact, I belonged to the group of people who do not believe in gurus. I used to think that everything was in me. The first experience I had was when I was six. That experience was similar to that which Ramana Maharshi had. When Ramana Maharshi was six years old, he had an experience as though he was dead and he ceased to be in his body. I had the same type of experience, but it seemed to be a little different. I felt the awareness; I did not feel the body. Do you understand what I mean? Suppose you are given a type of injection which does not make you unconscious, but numbs the body. At that moment you would be aware that you are, you can see your body, but you cannot feel it. For some time my awareness of the physical body was



completely numbed. It was only for a very short time, but as I remember it that seemed to be too long for me. I was taken to the doctors. I was fortunate that at that time there were not many of these blessed medicals in my country. One of the concepts of Plato is that where there is no police there is peace; where there are no doctors there is no disease; and where there are no soldiers there is no conflict. That is the concept of the ideal state of Plato in his famous book *The Republic*. So I was taken to those few medical men, but nothing could happen. From time to time the experience came to me for a very short time. In the meantime, I had acquainted myself with many types of spiritual movements current during my early childhood. I met the great lady, Ma Anandamayi, and acquainted myself with many other gurus.

Finally I came to one conclusion: this experience was spontaneous. I thought I should be able to develop it at will. But how to do so? I met many great people and they gave me their advice, but whatever they said did not really work in my mind, for two reasons: first, my early education had been in a Christian convent. Though born a Hindu, intellectually I was a Christian; people could not get into my bonnet. I had read books like Thomas A. Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, the Gospels, the Bible, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and had a thorough knowledge of these things.

Then I came to a subject called tantra. Someone told me that I should bring the ashes of a dead body and practise a certain mantra on that. I started doing that. I would go to the burial ground at night and practise all kinds of funny things there. One day my father came to know about it, he was a very strict religious man and the follower of a guru. He did not believe in all these things. He said, "Look here, if you do it, I'll throw you out!" However, the rule that I had been given was that I must finish that



round of practice. I had already done it for about twenty-five days or so and fifteen more days were left to finish. So I took the ashes of the dead body and put them in a bowl and in the night when everybody was in bed I would go up to the terrace and do the mantra chanting and invoking. One night a strange thing happened. It was a day before

the last night – the next night the practice was to finish. My father heard that someone was jumping on the roof, as if dancing. He thought that some thieves had come, so he took out his revolver and got out, but he saw nobody on the roof. He came back to bed. Again he heard the sounds. He went out and inspected and found nobody.

By this time his sleep was disturbed. He began to think that something must be wrong, either with him or with someone else. He called me and said, “What is happening here?” Like an innocent fellow I said, “I know nothing.” In the morning he went to the terrace to inspect again and found a little bit of ash there. He got his clue. Oh, he was

terribly angry and threw that bowl away. One day before the end, my sadhana was obstructed. So I have come to Italy with that spirit!

This is just a glimpse of my life that I am giving to you. However, such experiences did not really give me the satisfaction because I wanted to handle the experience by myself. After that incident I asked my father, "Well, you have disturbed my sadhana, but tell me how to develop that experience?" That developed a new relationship between us and that was the point where sannyasa came into my life. I decided not to live the normal type of life, but to dedicate my life to discovery of the experience, and to tell people that there is such an experience. In 1942, I left my parents, my place and everything.

At first I did not know where to go and I had very little money in my pocket. I happened to remember one of my adopted sisters. I had a real sister who was a doctor and had converted herself to Christianity, Catholicism. She died a few years after the conversion. Then I adopted the other girl as my sister; she was also a doctor. I went to her in western India. She had a guru who taught her kriya yoga. She took me to him. He was a very aged man, maybe over eighty. He looked after me very well in his ashram. I was about eighteen or nineteen. After about three months I felt that I had something more to know. He was a tantric guru who gave me knowledge of tantra. In fact, he initiated me into all the mysteries of tantric practices. He taught me vajroli and khechari mudra. But he told me that he was not my guru, he said that he was my teacher. So, my journey was still not over.

After a few months, I left that place. Without an address, without any destination and without any money. I do not know if I ate during that period. I vaguely remember that in a particular state of North India, at Bareilly in UP, I made certain decisions within myself. Do

you know what I decided? I sat on a train and said, "Let it take me wherever and I go there." I did not change trains at all because I had no money. In the train I saw a bearded man. He was wearing this guru dress and smoking cigarettes. I had not smoked for many days because I had no money. I went to him and said, "Will you allow me to have a little puff with you?" You know, the swamis in India, they have a peculiar way of behaving. He said, "Where are you going?" I replied, "Wherever the train goes." He said, "But the train keeps coming and going." I said, "I have also decided to do the same." He said, "Why?" I said, "Because my brain has failed. This spiritual light is confounding. I want it, but I can't think about anything regarding this." He said, "Find a nice guru for yourself." I said, "Where to find him?" He replied, "Gurus don't have a stamp, they don't have licenses." Then he told me about a place called Rishikesh and gave me all the pertinent details. I went to Rishikesh. I went to a swami there and he directed me to Swami Sivananda.

I met Swami Sivananda at 8.30 in the morning, 19 April 1943. I asked him only one thing when he asked me why I had come to him, "If one has a spiritual experience spontaneously, how can he become a master of that experience and have it at will?" He said, "Live here, practise karma yoga, purify yourself, and have absolute faith in God." And that was the day when my journey came to an end.

Throughout my life I have met many great people. I have respect for everybody and I never criticize anyone for any reason, but nobody has been able to make me surrender. My surrender to Swami Sivananda was complete and unconditional. Every action that he did was divinely contemplated and calculated. Even though he lived in a physical body, he was not a physical soul. In 1956, he called me and said, "What sadhana are you doing?" For twelve

years he did not ask me a question like this. I did practise asanas, pranayama, etc., but not at the command of my guru, as a matter of personal will. I practised a mantra, a very great quantity, may be twenty-four million, and at the same time practised karma yoga, day and night, like a bull, like a donkey. After a period of twelve years, he asked me, "What sadhana are you doing?" I told him, "I do asanas, pranayama, mantra japa" and a few more things that I did. He said, "You don't practise kriya yoga?" I said, "No." I had heard of it, but I did not do it. He took me to his room and in ten minutes he taught me kriya yoga, or you may put it another way, in ten minutes I learned kriya yoga. He gave me 108 rupees and said, "Now you can go. This ashram is not the place for you. Keep moving and take the word yoga from door to door and from shore to shore and from home to home." I left the ashram and kept moving. I was very young at that time. It was very difficult to be out like that because there were so many spiritual movements. A man like me could hardly survive, for I could never tell lies, never complicate matters, so I kept moving and moving for many years.

In 1963 on July the 13th, I suddenly woke up within myself. I was in Munger at that time. I just woke up within myself, not outside, and a vision crossed my mind. I was in Rishikesh, there was the Ganga, the beautiful Ganga, and on the Ganga, a beautiful ship was sailing. On the ship trumpets and conches were being blown, drums were being beaten and bells were ringing. I was not on the ship, I was on the bank of the Ganga, and the ship was sailing to the other side. As you know, a ship has a flywheel. The ship made such a movement that the flywheel threw sprinkles of water on me. My head, my body and my clothes were all wet, and I came out. The inner vision was finished. I understood what it meant, that Swami Sivananda had left his mortal body and entered into Mahasamadhi.

Yoga Therapy

Milano, April 1981

Hari Om Tat Sat

Yoga was considered a science of mysticism and occultism for many centuries. For long people thought that yoga was purely a spiritual science. However, in the recent years scientists have conducted many experiments throughout the world which have shown that the yoga practices are capable of helping a person in a sick condition. Thus, throughout the world, yoga clinics have now come into existence.

The first interaction that I had with yoga therapy was in 1943. I was an initiate in the ashram of Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh and I was about nineteen. Every morning I used to go to the Ganges for a bath. At five o'clock, one gentleman would stand on his head for half an hour every day. One day I asked him, "Why do you practise this for such a long time?" Then he related his story.

He was private secretary to a local kingdom and was suffering from dilation of the heart. He went to different countries for a cure, but could not be treated. So he started practising sirshasana under the instruction of his guru and his condition was cured.

I was surprised because I had a fairly good knowledge of medical science. I knew that if one has dilation in the heart, there is no help. But that man lived for thirty more years. You can understand that this surprised me very much. In the ashram of Swami Sivananda many people used to come to seek his advice on their diseases. Swamiji would prescribe yoga practices to them and they would get better. This compelled me to make a further study in yoga science.

Scientific studies have revealed that the different practices of yoga influence the physical system. For instance, if someone is suffering from a respiratory disease like asthma, what does he do? He breathes forcibly. You may have seen such a person. This indicates that he wants more oxygen, he wants more respiratory capacity.

Now, there is a practice in yoga. You sit in vajrasana, bend forward and stretch the hands forward, and remain there for about ten minutes. This is known as shashankasana. It has been found that if you practise shashankasana for ten or fifteen minutes, the body is able to consume more oxygen. The body is able to assimilate more oxygen. When the body is able to assimilate and absorb more oxygen, naturally asthma is relieved.

Other scientific studies have revealed that when you practise *Om* chanting or meditation, then the brain waves are altered. The different brain waves are alpha, beta, theta and delta. These different brain waves affect the body. If there are delta brain waves you will at once fall asleep. When you sit for meditation, do japa or *Om* chanting, alpha waves appear. The effect of alpha waves is a sudden drop in blood pressure and release of pressure from the heart. This means that the practice of meditation is equally good for heart diseases as for high blood pressure. It has been studied in Poland. In 1964, they conducted a research on sirshasana. They found the oxygen consumption, the rate of respiration, the position of skin resistance and the ventilation rate of blood in the brain during sirshasana. After the research, they came to understand that sirshasana can bring down tension considerably.

Similar researches were and are being conducted in Japan, Czechoslovakia, the US and India as well. There are many diseases which cannot be handled by medicine. It is necessary that proper experiments are now conducted





on the yogic science because yoga therapy is a science of common sense. A very good example can be given here. If a person is suffering from migraine, what does it mean? It means that hyper-acidity has affected his nerves and that has caused the headache. If you can make him free from this hyper-acidity, he will be free from the headache. So, what do you ask him to do? Drink a few glasses of warm saline water, four, five, six, seven, eight glasses, and vomit it out. Within a few minutes you find that the headache is gone. This is because the salt water has neutralized the acidity. It has brought it out, because salt is nauseating, you understand? Salt causes nausea, vomiting. When there is no acidity in your stomach, there is no headache.

In the same way, if you have a sore throat, what do you do? You take tiger balm and inhale, and nothing happens. Instead, try one morning to take a little warm water with salt, drink it, and then vomit it out. You will become all right. Disease is caused by three factors. Mucus, wind, acidity. If there is any imbalance in these three, there will be disease. We clean the mucus by the warm water. The old and infected mucus is thrown out with the saline water. This is a very simple example that I am giving you. People get catarrh every now and then. You have to just make a little hot water, pass it through one nostril and bring it out through the other nostril. No catarrh, no cold, no coryza and at the same time the adenoids are gone. This is a very simple science.

I give you another example. Once, an American group came to me with an electroencephalogram and many other instruments. They wanted to conduct experiments on yoga. I made one man lie down in the sleeping position, the position in which we relax, and his tension was measured. It was found that it was very high. It means that when you sleep at night, when you sleep for rest, as you have been doing here sometimes, you are not free

from tension. You are in tension. The machines were registering tension even in that posture. I made the man practise bhujangasana. You know what bhujangasana is? Lie down on the stomach, place both arms beside your shoulders, breathe in and raise the head and torso so that you are tightening the body. When the measurements were recorded in this posture, the machine showed zero tension. This means that the way we define tension is wrong – a man lying down has tension, a man practising bhujangasana has no tension!

When there is less activity in the body, tensions accumulate. When there is activity in the body, tensions keep moving. When tensions keep moving, that is called relaxation. It is a wonderful definition in yoga. We tried people in different postures. The tensions were measured in dhanurasana. What is dhanurasana? Lie down on the stomach, hold your ankles, pull your body like a bow. Can you imagine that there are no tensions in dhanurasana? Therefore, the definition of tension must be revised.

When tensions keep moving, that is relaxation, and when movements become static, that is tension. So, when you are on your easy chair you have tensions, and when you are moving in the garden or the park you have no tensions. By the practice of asanas, tensions can be brought down to a minimum. This is one of the important factors of yoga therapy. In India, we are working a lot on it. In fact, the government of India has been helping the researches.

Many research centres have come up in India where studies on yoga are being conducted. What is the effect of each and every asana, pranayama and hatha yoga kriyas? Do they really make a definite change in the body or are they merely exercises? I can again cite an experiment on siddhasana conducted on a man. Before practising siddhasana, his testes were producing spermatozoa,

as is the law of nature. After the practice of siddhasana for a few months, it was found that the testes were not producing spermatozoa so frequently. It was also found that in the yogis who practise siddhasana for twelve years, the testes did not produce spermatozoa at all. Why? It is because siddhasana has an immediate effect on the sexual processes of the human body. Siddhasana is not merely an asana for meditation. It controls two important channels. One channel is at the bottom and the other is at the top. When these two channels are blocked in siddhasana, the sperm is not produced. When the sperm is not produced, that is called brahmacharya.

What is brahmacharya? Brahmacharya means the same as celibacy in Christianity. When you are able to control the natural processes of sperm and semen, that is called brahmacharya. Why should we control it? What happens if the sperm is not produced? And what happens if it is produced? When the sperm is produced, it must be expelled out. If it is not expelled out, it creates mental, emotional and physical disaster. That is why many people go to mental hospitals.

The sperm must be expelled. If you stop the production of sperm through siddhasana, then there is no depression, dejection or melancholia, the mind remains calm and peaceful. The body is healthy, the digestive system is all right. But if the sperm is expelled out, there is fatigue, there is depression, there is melancholia, there is psychological guilt.

So, this is a small glimpse of yoga therapy that I am giving you. I am myself involved in a very big experiment. In a medical college we conducted a research; the subject was effects of yoga on coronary diseases. For five years we carried out the research. Many heart patients were referred to me. Nowadays in India people who have a little heart problem don't worry. They know that they can



practise yoga. Of course there are unfortunate people in India also who do not fully understand the benefits of yoga, but most people are advised to go to an ashram to learn asanas when they have a little palpitation, a little angina or a little ischemia, and they get better.

There are many diseases which I cannot enumerate here, but which can be very well controlled by the practices of yoga therapy. In our magazine *Yoga*, researches on yoga therapy are published every month. This is a very interesting subject which I think everybody should have some knowledge about. We have to treat our diseases with common sense. Disease definitely represents some sort of fault in our own system and if we can adjust the impulse of the nadis, have conscious control over the brain waves and have a proper system of pranayama, I believe that many of the diseases can be brought under control.

Hari Om Tat Sat

On Yoga Sadhana

Milano, April 1981

Q. How much time should be dedicated to the practice of asanas, pranayama and meditation during the day in order to have an efficient and well-done practice of yoga?



Paramahansaji: I have no hard and fast rules. If you have one hour at your disposal, you practise for an hour. If you have three hours, practise for three hours. I believe that whatever time one can snatch for the practices of yoga, one should. It is important that one makes use of every opportunity, every time that one has. In fact, you can practise asana and pranayama for two hours, even up to three hours in cold climates. You can practise meditation for as long as you can. If you can sit quietly for two hours or three hours, why not do it! But if you cannot sit for two or three hours, and you can sit for only half an hour, do it for half an hour because the most important purpose of human incarnation is experience of the Self.

Think for a moment what is the difference between human incarnation and animal incarnation. We also eat and they also eat. We also sleep and they also sleep. We are also insecure and they are also insecure. We have sexual interaction and they also have sexual interaction. If these four things are equally applicable in human life and animal life, then there is no difference between the two. However, the human body has been given, it has been ordained to us, for a definite purpose other than these four.

We may continue to fulfil the obligations of nature by discharging these four duties, but the ultimate or prime purpose of human incarnation is to realize the Self. The human body knows. He knows that he knows. He knows that he knows that he knows. You are listening to me. You know that you are listening to me. You know that you know that you are listening to me. This is the special awareness that the human body has inherited.

Animals get angry, animals become unhappy, animals become hungry, animals have passions, but they don't know that they have it, because they live on the instinctive plane. There you are merely acting. There is no awareness

of life. Therefore, how much time should you devote to yoga practices?

Yoga means inner awareness. Bhoga means external awareness. All the twenty-four hours of our life are dedicated to sensual experiences, the whole life passes like this, and still we want to know how much time we should devote to yoga. Find out how much time you can devote, how much time you are capable of devoting. According to that, go ahead with your yoga practices. Whatever yoga practices you do, they will pay you rich dividends in spiritual life. You may feel disappointment with the worldly things of life, but if you practise yoga, you will never be disappointed. It gives illumination, it gives inner power and it gives spiritual wisdom.

What does man really need? What is our necessity? Three things: light, power, wisdom. Without light, without power, without wisdom, we are not human beings. We are only homo sapiens.



I believe that whatever time one can snatch for the practices of yoga, one should. It is important that one makes use of every opportunity, every time that one has.

Satsang

Milano, April 1981

Q. Swamiji, can you explain the use of mantra in everyday life, as a prayer, inspiration or help to overcome the physical low or inertia created by the whirlpool of life?

Paramahamsaji: Mantra is a science. There are various types of mantras. Some mantras are utilized for removing physical suffering. Some mantras are utilized for the fulfilment of human desires. Some mantras are utilized for developing the higher consciousness. Some mantras are utilized for remembering God all the time.

There is one mantra given to you by your guru. That is your personal mantra. That mantra is to be utilized for your spiritual evolution in this life. Side by side with the personal mantra, you can have other mantras if you need them, from time to time. I will tell you what we do in India. When a child becomes eight years old, he is given a mantra by the family teacher. This mantra is to be practised by the child for the illumination of his intellect, so that he develops his memory, his body and character.

When a couple gets married, during the marital ceremony they are given another mantra. This mantra is to be utilized by both of them for a happy married life and family. Then, if there is some sort of trouble in the family, some disease or social difficulties, there are special tantric mantras which are to be repeated in a certain way for a period of time. As a result of the chanting of the mantra, the task is accomplished. For example, there is a mantra known as the Maha Mrityunjaya mantra. When someone is afflicted by a difficult disease and the doctors are not able to help, then the family chants the Maha Mrityunjaya

mantra a number of times every day. We have seen diseases being cured through such chanting. The tantric mantras are known to be very powerful.

Another kind of mantra is the guru mantra. When people become spiritual and want to follow the path of yoga in India, they go to a guru and get a mantra. Therefore, there is a complete science of mantra. This science was known to people in the ancient days at many places, but in India this science has been preserved very well.

Q. The Christian religion says that human unhappiness is not only impossible to eliminate, but also necessary. This unhappiness is considered an important instrument of knowledge. What is the value of this position in relation to expansion and liberation?

Paramahamsaji: No matter what the great enlightened people said, ultimately they knew the same thing. It is only the language and symbols that are different. In tantra we call it liberation, in Buddhism you call it nirvana, in Christianity you call it salvation. Similarly, in Christianity you call it suffering, in yoga you call it austerity and in Buddhism you call it spiritual effort. The terminologies are different no doubt. The method of explanation and expression is also different, but ultimately what they speak about is the same.

There is an eternal existence. This eternal existence is beyond pain, beyond suffering. In order to experience this eternal union, one has to pass through various phases of mind, of *dukha* or suffering. Even as in Christianity it is said that suffering can be overcome, in Buddhism they speak of four eternal truths. There is pain, there is a cause for the pain, the pain can be removed, and there is a way. In the same way, in yoga and tantra they say that if you are far from the Self, you suffer. If you are close to the Spirit, you are not unhappy. What is the purpose of yoga?

To eliminate the root of all suffering. Where is the root of suffering? The mind is the root of suffering. How to eliminate the root? By transforming it.

Thus, ultimately, these great men, these great scriptures are talking of one and the same thing. Still we have to discuss things a little more. Suffering is known as *dukha*. Enjoyment is known as *sukha*. Pleasure and pain are qualities of the mind. When the mind is withdrawn in deep sleep, you have no pain and you are not aware of pleasure.

Pleasure and pain do not belong to the object. They belong to the quality of the mind. What is pleasant today can be painful tomorrow and what is painful today can be pleasant the next day. No object is absolutely pleasant or painful. An individual whom you love today is pleasant. An object you love today is pleasant. However, the same person and the same object can give you pain in the course of time. This is completely dependent on the mind.

Therefore, if you have to overcome suffering, you have to totally transform the mind. Up to a particular point the mind experiences pain and pleasure, but after some time it does not. This is the philosophy of suffering. People suffer on account of the incompleteness of their experience. If you are able to see more than you can, there will be no suffering.

Desire causes suffering. Attachment causes suffering. Jealousy causes suffering. Frustration causes suffering. These are the things that should be overcome. How to overcome desire? How to overcome fear? How to overcome jealousy? This is the thing we have to understand. Just because we know fear or desires, we cannot transcend them. The mind should be transformed. The transformation of mind is very important if you want to transcend pain and suffering. When the mind expands, you transcend suffering.

Q. Is it only the guru who gives a spiritual name or does the disciple ask for it? Does the choice for a spiritual name happen at any time or is it bound to happen because of the evolution of the disciple? And with what criteria does the guru choose the name?

Paramahamsaji: Everybody has a spiritual name, everybody has a worldly name. The name represents the character. If a man is a robber, you tell him he is a robber, that is his name. If a man lies, you tell him he is a liar, that is his name. If a man is suffering from jealousy, you tell him he is jealous, that is his name. These names represent the quality of his personality.

The spiritual name represents your spiritual personality. The guru can give names to his disciples at any time, but we have to be a little careful. If I keep on giving names, there will be a lot of confusion in the minds of people. Therefore, when a disciple has realized that it is time for him to realize his inner name, he should approach his guru. Just as a mother can understand the nature of the baby, the guru can understand the quality of the disciple, and according to that he gives the name.

I always feel that the spiritual name is a lucky name. I have been thinking about it for many years. When I was born, I had a different name. I continued with that name for nineteen years. Then I had it changed by my guru. With the change of my name, my destiny changed. My astrological chart is a very bad chart. Everything is negative in it; it says that I will be an idiot, a loafer, a vagabond. I will be the destroyer of people, I will be destitute, I will be ill all my life. However, my guru gave me a name and my destiny changed. My astrological life, the life that nature gave me, was completely cancelled. Therefore, when I give a name to my disciples, I am aware of this particular aspect. The name must change the destiny from worst to good.

There is another point. The body has one name, but what is the name of your inner Self? The inner Self is full of light. The inner Self is eternal. The inner Self is blissful. The inner Self is consciousness. Therefore, when I give names to my disciples, I always add 'ananda' at the end. *Ananda* means bliss. And bliss means neither pleasure nor pain, the same attitude in pleasure and in pain. When the mind does not change from pleasure to pain, that stage is called ananda and therefore I call them ananda.

So, whenever you feel that now you should be called by the inner name, by the name of the spirit, change your name. If I am there, I will help you. If I am not there, approach some other wise man and he will help you. It is good to discard the old robe. You have worn this robe for thirty, forty, fifty years. Now have a new garment. The name you have had for so many years has grown old. Have a new name.

Q. Do ida and pingala cross in the chakras? And when the kundalini is awakened, is prana crossing these nadis, is prana flowing in these nadis?

Paramahamsaji: I will give you a pictorial concept. Imagine the spinal column. At the end of the spinal column there is the tailbone. At the end of the tailbone is a small gland. From this particular point, three channels emanate. The left is known as ida. The right is known as pingala. In the centre is sushumna. Ida represents the mental shakti, pingala represents vital, prana shakti. Sushumna represents the spiritual power, the spirit. In most people only two nadis are active: ida and pingala. Sushumna is not active in most people. This channel is a silent channel. We call it the inactive channel.

These two nadis cross each other at different chakras. Emanating from mooladhara they first cross each other



at swadhisthana chakra. Then they cross each other at manipura, the solar chakra; third, they cross each other at anahata or the cardiac chakra and the fourth time they cross each other is at the neck, at the vishuddhi chakra. Then they meet in ajna chakra. These nadis are active. In ida flows the mental energy, in pingala flows the pranic energy. These two energies are distributed through the chakras to different organs of the body. That is why you have consciousness and life in every part of the body.

When the awakening of kundalini takes place, the energy passes through sushumna and sushumna becomes active. Sushumna is the direct channel. It goes straight from mooladhara right up to ajna. It does not get any connection with any chakra. Awakening in mooladhara is awakening in ajna. The moment awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra, the energy makes its way from mooladhara up to ajna chakra. Therefore, two things are very important to note. One, awakening of kundalini and two, awakening of sushumna. I give you an example. There is a generator. You start the generator, but you have not plugged in the cable. What will happen? The generator will keep on generating electricity, but the distribution will not take place. You will have to connect the plug into the generator, then the energy generated will pass through the cable to different areas of the house.

In the same manner, the mooladhara chakra is the seat of a higher, powerful generator. In order to start the generator you need some sort of pranic energy. This pranic energy is generated through pranayama. When you practise pranayama, you generate energy. This energy is forced down by a positive pressure, which starts the generator in mooladhara chakra. Then this generated energy is pushed upward by a negative pressure, which takes the energy through sushumna up to ajna chakra.

In ajna chakra the three nadis unite, but usually only ida and pingala are active, sushumna is not active. This is like an electrical circuit. If the circuit has positive and negative lines but no neutral, then if there is any extra voltage the fuse will blow. When the neutral becomes active, the extra energy has a channel. In the same way, ida and pingala are united all the time. Energy is flowing through both, but its voltage, its effulgence, is very low. The sushumna channel is disconnected. Energy is not flowing through sushumna. When awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra and this energy is guided up to ajna chakra, then there is current in ida and pingala as well as sushumna. At that time, enlightenment takes place. At that time, the light shines and you have various experiences. The higher mind starts working. This is how you have to understand the awakening of kundalini, the awakening of sushumna and union of the three in ajna chakra.

Now, how do Indians understand this? In India there are two rivers, Ganga and Yamuna. Yamuna is blue and Ganga is white in colour. Ganga represents ida, Yamuna represents pingala. These two rivers originate in the Himalayas and their confluence is at Allahabad, a city in North India. That place is known among the Hindus as Triveni, which means 'union of three'. However, there are only two rivers. Where is the third one? The Hindus believe that Ganga and Yamuna are perceptible channels, and there is a third river known as Saraswati, which flows underground. It is subterranean. That is the imperceptible river.

Thus, Saraswati represents sushumna. Saraswati is a subterranean flow while ida and pingala flow on the surface. The three have their confluence in Triveni. The Hindus believe that one must take a bath at this confluence. Once in twelve years, when the sun is in Aquarius, it is a special time. Millions upon millions of Hindus go to take

a dip at the confluence in Allahabad during that time. This has to be understood as symbology. Ida, pingala and sushumna unite at ajna chakra. If you awaken your consciousness and then dissolve your consciousness in ajna chakra, you purify it.

Another concept is very important: the sun in Aquarius. It is very important that when the union takes place after awakening of kundalini, the effulgence of the sun and the sun are visualized. The awakening of the solar vision is an indication that it is the right time for you to merge your consciousness in ajna chakra.

Q. Is it not dangerous for one to try to awaken the kundalini if one is not purified and one does not yet have a strong will?

Paramahansa ji: It's a very funny question. You should put another question by its side. Should one try to have a baby? Why? Maybe the mother will die, or maybe the baby will die. Or you may have a caesarean delivery. Do these things make you think, "Oh no, I don't want to have a baby at all." Then why do think in this way about the kundalini?

Awakening of kundalini is the birth of Christ. Awakening of kundalini is the birth of Krishna and Buddha. Awakening of kundalini is the birth of Mohammed. It is one of the greatest events of life. No matter the consequences. The awakening of kundalini is one of the greatest events in the life of a yogi.

When you have a baby, when you become pregnant, you never think that you are unhealthy. You never think that you are too fat. You don't think that you don't need the baby at all. In the same manner, when awakening of kundalini is the destiny of mankind, you will have to experience it.

I know that many people say, “If you are impure, the kundalini should not be awakened.” Many times I have also said this on account of my own ignorance. But the awakening of kundalini is the awakening of the Mother power in man. When the sun rises, what happens to the darkness? When the kundalini awakens, no impurities will remain. Impurity and purity is only a concept. Nobody is pure and nobody is impure. It is a social concept. It is a religious concept. It is an ethical and moral concept. You are not dirty or impure, but it is only because your religion says so that you believe you are impure. Religion cannot decide your personality.

Awakening of kundalini is awakening of the great light in man. The moment it rises in the horizon, it rises like the sun. There will be no darkness, no suffering, no guilt, no impurity, everything will be effulgent.

What risk are you talking about? Well, one may go mad. Have you thought about the risks in life? You have so many desires, passions, plans and ambitions. You have such nervousness. If you don’t think that these symptoms are risky, then why do you think that awakening of kundalini is risky? This life is risky. When I fly from India to South America, it’s the greatest risk that I undertake. When you were born from your mother’s womb, it was a great risk. Anything can happen at any time.

With the awakening of kundalini life becomes smooth. Your plans, your projects in life become clear. Your decisions are accurate. Your personality is energetic and powerful. What more do you want? However, when there is awakening of kundalini there are certain symptoms and it is sometimes very difficult to understand to them.

You feel a burning sensation in mooladhara chakra. You feel energy passing through sushumna, coming up

and down, up and down. Many times you hear drums, flutes, birds, music of celestial nature. Sometimes you feel that peacocks are singing. Sometimes you feel that your body has become so light. Sometimes you visualize your spinal cord like a fluorescent light. Many times you feel illumination within you, hundreds of little lights seem to be burning. This is one side of it.

Then there is another side. All the anger comes out. All the passion comes out, all the suppressions come out. Sometimes you are afraid the whole night. Sometimes for days together you have nothing in the mind besides sex. Sometimes you think of nothing but food. However, all these symptoms pass within a few days or weeks. Many times temptations come to you – you get some psychic power. You develop clairvoyance, telepathy, clairaudience, psycho telekinesis or healing. This brings a lot of temptations to you. But this is also a phase and it passes away. Sometimes you don’t feel like eating for days together. For fifteen or twenty days you have no hunger, no appetite at all. For days together you live a life of complete dispassion. Nothing is interesting in life. Everything seems to be dry like a desert. These are just a few experiences which I have narrated, but they pass quickly.

There comes a moment when the storm settles, and when the storm settles the yogi lives a very normal life. His external life is like anybody else’s, but his inner awareness is much greater and vaster. Therefore, do not be afraid of any risk. Whether you can observe celibacy or not, whether your mind is pure or not, whether you have a sick body or a healthy body, practise your yoga every day. If the awakening of kundalini takes place, all your limitations will be overcome, because darkness can never exist before light. Impurity can never exist before the awakening of kundalini.

Q. Some say that yogic practices are beneficial, but tantric practices can be dangerous. Please clarify.

Paramahansaaji: Whenever I hear people speaking negatively about tantra, I feel they should be corrected. Even in India many swamis think that yoga is one thing and tantra something else. In fact, tantra explains the expansion of consciousness and liberation of energy, but the way of actualizing this is through the practices of yoga. Therefore, all those who teach yoga actually teach tantra.

We have to be honest with ourselves. Tantra teaches us to be honest and to accept ourselves for what we are. What we cannot renounce or give up, we must accept. If we cannot stop drinking, we must accept it. If we cannot give up a non-vegetarian diet, we must accept it.

Q. Why do we get fungus and how to recover from it?

Paramahansaaji: There is a particular disease which is created on account of fungus infection. The first important thing you have to do is a regular course of fasting and then dynamic yoga practices with hatha yoga cleansing. In addition to this, there is a practice known as amaroli. We have published a book on the subject. You can read that. The practice of amaroli is very important in treating fungus. You can apply it and also drink it.

Q. How can one overcome the desire for food, especially sweet things?

Paramahansaaji: Eating sweets is not bad. Eating spicy food is also not bad. Therefore, those who are addicted to eating sweets, let them continue. However, there is a superior sweetness and that taste can be had through the practice of khechari mudra.

Khechari mudra is practised by young people of twelve or thirteen in a certain way and by adults in a different



way. The latter should sit in vajrasana, then assume simhasana, the lion's pose, and bring the tongue out, just like a dog's tongue. They should practise this every day. Also, every morning after brushing the teeth, when you are at the wash basin, project your tongue out and rub it with two or three fingers. Then make the sound 'Aah'. Do it every day.

Third point. Fold the tongue and stick it against the upper palate near the epiglottis. Keep it there. Continue with these practices every day. One fine day you will have the taste of sweetness. You will say, "What happened? Have I eaten sugar through the nose? It's very sweet." However, there is a difference. The moment you begin to taste this sweetness, you begin to go high. You feel filled with inner pleasure. The mind becomes slow, the body becomes calm and there is a point where the consciousness just hangs. It is not intoxication. Even if it is, it does not matter. It is spiritual intoxication.

Some people call it ambrosia, some call it amrita, others call it divine water. In the days when the apostles used to baptize, they did not pour water externally. They did not sprinkle water. It was exactly the same practice. The apostles used to teach their disciples to practise khechari. When they practised khechari mudra, this amrita, the nectar, the divine water came down. When this happened, the person was considered baptized. Now everybody has forgotten about this, but we remember it. Baptism can never take place unless this water flows. Practise khechari mudra, let the nectar drip, and then you are baptized.

The seat of this nectar is the cranial passage. You know what this point is? Have you seen the Hare Krishna boys? They keep a tuft of hair at the top the head. That is the centre of the nectar, but they don't know it. They think it is a sectarian mark. They think that if they keep a tuft,

they become Hindu. It's foolishness, nobody can become a Hindu. You have to become a yogi. That's important. What's the point of becoming a Hindu, then a Christian, then a Muslim, then a Buddhist? You be what you are. It is perfectly all right. What is important is that you have to be enlightened. Enlightenment is important and not religion.

Khechari mudra is practised in another way also, but not everybody should do it. Those who use this method take a crystal piece and rub it against the root of the tongue every day for months together. It is not cutting; it is rubbing. It is just creating friction. After that, they apply a little turmeric powder. After a few months they take fresh cow's butter, place it on the tongue and rub the tongue; the tongue is milked just as a cow is milked. It's massaging the tongue.

When the tongue is milked, it gets elongated and becomes even longer than a dog's or tiger's tongue. Then the tongue is able to touch the middle of the forehead. Now the tongue is turned inside and inserted into the epiglottis. The epiglottis is the nasal passage. It is blocked or corked with the tongue and the breath is also stopped. This is a trick; it is a technique.

Have you heard that some yogis go underground for many days? The compartment is completely sealed with cement, no oxygen is allowed to enter. They stop the heart and they survive. How? Through khechari mudra. Khechari mudra was traditionally practised by yogis from the age of ten or twelve, because at that time there are very few toxins in the body and it is very flexible and supple.

When the tongue is inserted into the epiglottis, it stimulates certain nerve glands there. This stimulation is carried to the higher centre in the brain and in the course of time the nectar begins to flow from this centre, known as bindu visarga chakra. *Bindu* means nectar drop, *visarga*

means flowing. It is the centre from where the nectar drops or flows. The fluid in the cranial passage is very, very little. It's not even one drop. You take a needle and put it in water; whatever remains at the end of the needle is the quantity. This nectar begins to flow into the body. It is very sweet. So, if you want to overcome your greed for sweets, you should practise khechari mudra.

Q. In which way can yoga help bronchitis and allergic cold? And which pranayama do you suggest to treat this?

Paramahamsaji: I can suggest two practices. One, vastra dhauti; second, ujjayi pranayama. What is vastra dhauti? Every morning take a long piece of cloth and swallow as much as can go into your alimentary canal. If you have difficulty in swallowing it, drink a little salt water and it will help you. Then take it out. Don't swallow the cloth completely. Every day increase the amount a little. Practise this every day, followed by ujjayi pranayama. Practise the two every day. The conditions will become all right.

Q. What would you suggest to a student who would like to practise sirshasana for the nervous system and would like to keep sukhasana or padmasana for meditation, but cannot do it because of cervic arthrosis or constipation and inflammation of the sciatic nerve?

Paramahamsaji: First of all, you must practise makarasana, crocodile pose, and bhujangasana, serpent pose. That will help you in sciatica. Makarasana should be practised by a person who has an inflamed sciatic nerve. Not only for a few minutes, but off and on the whole day, for as long as you can. It will help you.

Secondly, do not use rubber foam or Dunlop cushions. Use hard beds and hard mattresses. That is very necessary for people with an inflamed sciatic nerve.

Practise steadiness every day for about ten minutes without a single movement. Sit in an asana like sukhasana which will make your spine straight with the neck thrown a little bit backwards. Breathe in and out, but don't make any movement. It will work like the traction principle. Practise ardha matsyendrasana, the spinal twist. This will also help you. In three months you will be ready for sirshasana.

Sciatica, slipped disc, cervical arthritis or spondylitis – all these things can be helped with yoga postures. You should remember one thing. Whenever you sit straight with your spine upright and your neck thrown a little bit backwards, it is not a religious posture. It is important for the bones of the shoulder and the neck.

When you suffer from spondylitis, the medical men put you in traction. Bhujangasana, makarasana, shalabhasana and dhanurasana have the same principle. Also practise akashi mudra. It is a mudra in kriya yoga which means 'look at the sky'. Remain in this mudra for ten minutes, without any movement at all, don't even move your eyelids. It will help to relieve the discomfort in your neck. It will also help to remove the pain in your shoulder joints and the back.

Then practise sirshasana. Sirshasana can also be practised without shifting the load on the head. It can be practised by balancing yourself on both palms. Throw your legs up and all the load is maintained by your arms and not by your head. If you can't do it, ask someone to help you. If your guru is strong, sirshasana is very easy. He can hold you by your two legs and you can hang upside down. Many times I do it for my disciples.

Q. Tantra meditation is static, life is movement. How to harmonize the contradiction in everyday life?

Paramahamsaji: Tantra mediation is active and passive both. If you read my book on meditation you will get a reply to this question in detail. There are two types of

meditation, one is passive, the other is dynamic and active. You are right as far as the passive meditations are concerned, but there are also dynamic and active types of meditation.

Remember that in the active aspect of life the passive quality of meditation gives a proper balance. If you work hard the whole day and sleep well the whole night, a balance is created. If you work the whole day and don't sleep at night, that is imbalance. If you don't work the whole day but sleep and also sleep at night, it's imbalance. So, when you participate in the activities of life dynamically, if you expose yourself to the quiet type of meditation for some time, this will help you in equalizing tensions. And when tensions are equalized and normalized, you can be more dynamic.

Q. Bloomfield, the author of *Transcendental Meditation* says that tantra in the ancient Tibetan practice considers sexual life not only a biological function, but a right, sacred and divine. And it is for a couple who are looking for an ultimate experience of love and not just a mechanical erotic process. Do you agree? I don't think the western mentality is like this.

Paramahamsaji: There have always been arguments about sexual life. Many people have been abusing it for many centuries. Rules and regulations have been created. Taboos have been formed, but even today man is unable to transcend sexual life. Man will never be able to transcend sexual life because it is a very important link between the gross and the subtle experience.

The person who asked the question said the West cannot understand it, I say the West alone can understand it, because the philosophy of sexual life has become different in the West. Many taboos have fallen down, definitions are cracking and this has happened in the last few decades. There is no doubt that the sexual act is a very

important act in one's life. It is a universal act. It happens in various realms of life. However, what is important is that the energy which goes downwards is directed upwards.

I do not much understand the things about love and eroticism talked about in this question, but I know just one thing. And you also know it. There is a certain experience at the climax of sex. It is very momentary because you can't prolong it. Imagine if you could prolong it for a minute or two – it will create an explosion. The whole mind will be completely blown in one minute. You won't be able to stand it. The whole body will vibrate. There are people who have cited this experience.

An ordinary man has no purpose behind his sexual life. It is followed for progeny or for pleasure. These are the lower aims, but there is a higher aim for which nature created this act. That is called experience of the transcendental awareness. Of course, this is not the only way. You can experience the transcendental awareness without sex as well. However, since everybody is involved in that act, why not develop it properly and scientifically? Why don't you do it with a purpose? Why do you do it with passion? Why do you do it like animals? Why do you do it in ignorance? Why don't you understand the anatomy and biology of this natural act?

In tantric Buddhism a lot has been talked about the sexual act. In fact, they spoke about it in all the old traditions; however, in the last few centuries man has become too gross, therefore he doesn't understand it. Today most people consider the sexual act as a sin. If it is a sin, why do you do it? Don't do it. If you do it, you must understand what it is. You not only have to be honest; you have to be true. We have been dishonest to ourselves.

If a particular point of experience in the sexual climax can be prolonged by any tantric method, it can awaken the sushumna. It can awaken the silent areas of the brain.



It can completely shake the whole body. It can change the quality of the mind, it can give you a new experience.

Finally, I tell you, man can never transcend sex. There is only one way. Have the ultimate experience through sex. Nobody can become a celibate by suppressing the sexual instinct. Women come into your mind and you say, "No, no, no." Sexual ideas come into your mind and you say, "Oh, no, no." Hypocrites! You can never become a celibate.

I am a celibate because I have attained the ultimate experience through sexual life. I have attained the same experience through sexual life which they attain through pranayama, which they attain through meditation, which they attain through religious experience. What is that experience? Jump over the mind.

Die and live. Is this not said in the Bible? "By God I swear, I die every night." What is that death? You are no more for a moment. You are not aware of name, you are not aware of form. You are not aware of yourself, you are not aware of time. You are not aware of anything. You are dead. Yet, you are aware. What is that awareness I don't know. It is unbound awareness. It is undefined awareness.

Celibacy is very difficult. Just because you enter into an order and say I am a celibate, it does not become true. My knowledge may fail me, but my experience can never fail me. Therefore, all the householders and married people who are here and all the young unmarried boys and girls who are here, must remember that you can transcend the mind by proper sexual interaction in your family life.

The man represents Shiva, the woman represents Shakti. Man represents time, woman represents space. Man represents the positive pole of energy, woman represents the negative pole of energy. The sexual act is the coming together of the two poles. There are

three things: time, space and object. Time is one pole, space is another pole: positive and negative. Man and woman, Shiva and Shakti. When they come close, an explosion takes place in the realm of matter, and energy is generated. An experience is created and that experience is not the empirical experience. This experience is fantastic. Thousands and thousands of suns in heaven are nothing before that light.

There are moments when you are gone; therefore, God and nature have given you one very important technique and you must learn it properly. A guru will teach you. Gurus feel shy, but I don't feel shy because I am so sure about it. I am not creating a permissive society. I am teaching transcendence.

You must practise siddhasana. Practise it before marriage. You must practise uddiyana bandha and vajroli. The men should practise vajroli, the girls must practise sahajoli. You should be able to hold kumbhaka, for one minute, two minutes, three minutes. If you can't hold kumbhaka, you can't hold *veerya*, semen. If you can't hold kumbhaka, you can't retain the climax. If you can practise two minutes of kumbhaka, two minutes of uddiyana bandha, two minutes of vajroli or sahajoli and two minutes of concentration in bhrumadhya, you are not a householder, you are a yogi.

Your sexual act is not a sin. It is yoga. But if you can't do all this, then I can't say anything. If you can't practise uddiyana bandha, vajroli or sahajoli, shambhavi mudra or kumbhaka, then you are animals. This is the fundamental difference between an animal act and the tantric act. It is the young people who must be taught this and it will give you such peace of mind. Your generation will become free of guilt and it will also cure many mental diseases. It will create confidence in yourself and finally, it will improve the relationships between husband and wife, because



then you are no longer husband and wife, you are Shiva and Shakti. What a nice concept it is. How can you then fight? How can you then divorce each other?

Q. Why does man try to destroy himself? If he is bad or depressed, he will try to commit suicide. If he is well, he will lead a life which damages his psyche and body. What is the cause of this search for death before they have lived?

Paramahansa: People commit suicide when they realize that life is fruitless. Well, I will also do it if I think that life has no purpose. Why to eat? Why to enjoy? Why to work? Why to marry? They don't see any purpose because they see that we are going to die anyway. If I am going to die some day, then why not today? Why build this family? Why build this house? Why earn so much money? After all, I am going to leave all this.

There are people who think like this and so they take a very drastic step in life. Therefore, it is necessary that everybody should be given a higher purpose. This life alone cannot be the purpose. This life is a link in a long chain. Thus, it is necessary to have faith in the philosophy of reincarnation because it gives meaning to this life. It makes you understand that this life is not the first and the last, but it is a link in a long chain.

It is also necessary that a person should be made aware of the spiritual aim. If you just give him a materialistic aim, then these problems take place. It is very illogical. Why are you born? "To live." Why do you live? "To eat." Why do you eat? "To live." Why do you earn so much money? "I have a family." Such funny things! People think too much about them and suddenly they decide, "Oh no, this is no good. This life should be put to an end."

To eliminate these things from society, we have a few suggestions. First, a never-ending spiritual aim. Second,

belief in the philosophy of reincarnation. Third, the possibility of evolution of the higher mind. With these, the mental symptoms can be overcome.

Q. Every wise man teaches his own disciples the only one sure way to reach happiness. If realization is one, why so many wise men?

Paramahansa: Realization is one, but the wise men are many because there are many foolish people. How can you expect one wise man to teach generations and generations? Every time a teacher has come down to teach, the people are different. The teacher has to teach wisdom according to the quality of the students. There is no difference in teaching. The ultimate realization is one, but one teacher is not enough. Therefore, different teachers come from time to time to teach different people the same thing.

Q. Yesterday, you talked about kriya yoga. Is it the same kriya yoga taught by Paramahansa Yogananda and the Self Realization Fellowship, or is it different?

Paramahansa: Kriya yoga is a tantric practice. The practice of kriya yoga can be found in the tantric texts. The same tradition of kriya yoga has been going on for thousands of years. Various gurus have taught it in their own times to their disciples. Even in the Bible, the New Testament, there is a clear reference to kriya yoga practices. Which means that it was known to people even before Christ. However, for a few hundred years we passed through a dark period when spiritual values were not encouraged. In the recent years, Paramahansa Yogananda again spoke about kriya yoga to the whole world. At that time he was in the United States. Later, we started talking about the kriya yoga which I teach or which

my guru taught, but it is not different from what Swami Yogananda taught.

In the same manner, in the future, some other gurus might teach kriya yoga and they will also teach the same thing. But there is a little difference. It is not in kriya yoga; it is in the art of teaching.

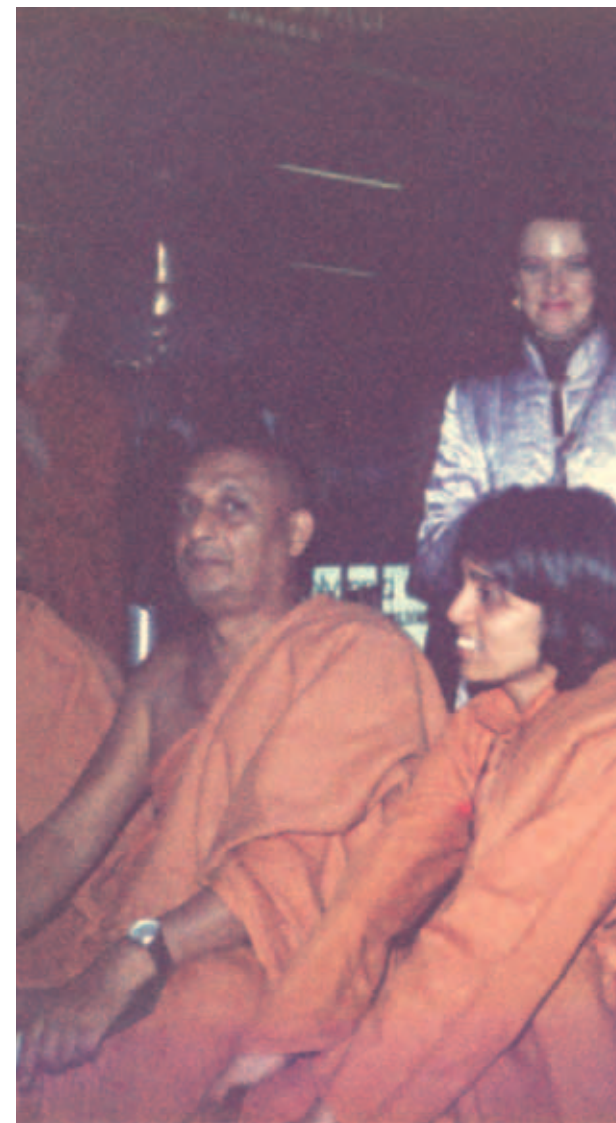
When Swami Yogananda was teaching kriya yoga to Americans, the Americans did not even know how to sit in a posture. Yoga was quite new to them. So he simplified the practices for them a little. However, when I started teaching kriya yoga, the people were already ready. They had been practising asanas, pranayama and hatha yoga. Therefore, my system of kriya yoga is not a simplified system. It is exactly the same system as written in the tantric books.

In the olden days, the knowledge was passed on orally. Thus, so far raja yoga was being taught to people orally. I am the first person who has put it down in black and white. In fact, I am glad to inform you that a complete course of kriya yoga is now being printed in India as an international edition. It is a complete system of kriya yoga from alpha to omega. The asanas, pranayamas, mudras, bandhas, the kriya yoga practices, the rules, the regulations, the restrictions, everything is there in detail. It is a very big volume.

So, those who have been following the yoga teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda are doing everything all right. But it would be a little better if they would improve the practices a little according to the original scriptures.

In kriya yoga, there is a practice called khechari mudra where you turn your tongue and fix it against the upper palate. But many people can never do it. They find it very difficult and painful. So, what to do? Paramahansa Yogananda devised a method of applying olive oil because the purpose has to be served, the throat has to be irrigated.

But khechari mudra and olive oil cannot be equated. So, there are some differences in the method of teaching, but not in the system.



Satsang

Milano, April 1981

Q. What is the meaning of maithuna?

Paramahamsaji: The word *maithuna* is a Sanskrit word. It is derived from the word *mithuna*. The literal meaning of *mithuna* is union. It does not mean sexual union. It means union. When two objects come together, it is known as *mithuna*. But somehow, the word has come to represent sexual interaction.

Q. We have so many desires that we don't know how to enjoy the present. We are always thinking of the future.

Paramahamsaji: The mind dwells in desires. It broods over the past, it is dissatisfied with the present, it has anticipation of the future. Therefore, it is always unhappy. This is what I call incompetence of the mind. When you know that the past is gone, why do you think about it? Everybody knows the past is gone and still you live with it. You know that the present is in your hands, still you are dissatisfied, you are full of complaints about the present. You are always living in anticipation of the future. This is the incompetence of the mind. It can't help itself. In order to overcome suffering, it is necessary that this particular quality or character of the mind is changed.

Q. What is the difference between fantasy of mind and expansion of mind?

Paramahamsaji: Fantasy and expansion of the mind are two different experiences. When you excite the mind by a thinking process, then fantasies begin. Fantasy is a process of voluntary thinking while expansion is a

process of the deeper layers of consciousness. When you experience expansion, the deeper layers of the mind are influenced.

Q. Can psychic depression be treated purely by asanas?

Paramahamsaji: Psychic depression is a very important symptom of man's melancholic nature and it occurs due to suppression of pranic energy. If there is an imbalance in the pranas, then depression takes place. The practices of asana, pranayama and particularly hatha yoga are very beneficial.

Q. What are the twenty-four elements of the mind?

Paramahamsaji: The Samkhya and yoga philosophies have tried to enumerate the different elements that comprise the mind or chitta. The mind is an outcome of different substances such as experiences of the past, the senses of action, *karma indriyas*, and the senses of knowledge, *jnana indriyas*. There are three bodies: the gross, subtle and causal. There are five koshas or sheaths: annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijnanamaya kosha and anandamaya kosha. There are five pranas: prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana. Then, the totality of experience including past lives. Then the hormones, or rather the gross hormones of the body. All these comprise the twenty-four or twenty-six elements of the mind.

Q. You mentioned past life, how to experience this?

Paramahamsaji: It is a very controversial topic which may offend the personal philosophy of some people. I do not want to discuss a point which may oppose someone's personal philosophy; however, we can discuss it on academic grounds.

First of all, we will have to understand the process of metamorphosis. I believe and I see that matter is indestructible. I have studied physics and philosophy both. I am talking about the point of physics here. Of course, I know that ultimately matter does not exist.

Mind itself is not absolute. Then, how can you say that matter exists? This is what philosophy says and so does quantum physics. However, leave that aside for the time being. Let us consider that matter is indestructible. Point one. Point two, matter is convertible. Point three, matter exists. Then what is matter? If matter is a state, then something has to follow and something has to precede it.

When you look at an object, you must understand that it was and it will be. What you call matter is your area of experience in relation to time. This matter today exists because I have experienced it, but I did not see it yesterday. Did it not exist? I am not going to see it tomorrow. Will it not exist tomorrow? Just because I don't see what happens after my death, or just because I can't see what was before I was born does not mean that it does not exist.

Q. How can one experiment with past life?

Paramahamsaji: An object exists in relation to time and the experiencer. If the experience is eternal, then the experiencer will understand the eternity of consciousness. This is first argument that I want to put forth.

Second, every tree has a seed and we see it being reborn. Coriander is born from coriander. It never becomes mango. We will have to understand the philosophy of karma in the same way. Every karma is an experience. Every experience is recordable and can be recalled. If an experience can be recalled, it means that it exists. If I meet you in 1981, I can recall you when I meet you again in 1985. This means that when I am looking at

you, a karma is taking place. This karma is an experience. This experience is an archetype. This experience is like a seed which I can recall in the future.

If I can recall an experience in five years, I can recall it in a hundred years also. The totality of man's karma attains metamorphosis or reincarnation. This is the first thing one has to understand in relation to the evolution of human mind. It is not just a question of rebirth. We have to try to understand the whole thing as evolution of matter.

Evolution is continuous. There are three strata of evolution in creation. The lowest strata is tamasic, the intermediate strata is rajasic, the superior strata is sattwic. The consciousness is passing through these three strata of evolution life after life, incarnation after incarnation, womb after womb. The purpose of creation, the purpose of consciousness is to evolve into a sattwic state.

Q. I would like to understand up to what point is it correct to maintain a position of meditation when I feel negative effects on the physical plane – a kind of itching in the legs, pain in the legs, pain in the arms and so on.

Paramahansaaji: To maintain one posture is a great achievement in yoga. It does not come by obstinacy; it comes by controlling the body by asanas. Why do you get itching? Because of some defects taking place in the circulatory system. Why do you get pain in the joints? Because the energy is not able to pass freely. Why do you feel lethargic? Because the pranic energy is working at the lower level. Why do you get pain in the buttocks and the upper portion of the thigh? Because your stomach is badly loaded. Why is there depression during the posture? Because there is gas in the body.

If you can eliminate these defects, you can maintain the same position for one hour unflinchingly. That is precisely the reason why the series of asanas known



as pawanmuktasana must be perfected. This is also the reason why siddhasana is considered the best, padmasana next, then vajrasana. There is also an opinion that when there is excess deposit of uric acid in the knees, thighs and the joints, one is not able to maintain the posture.

I will give you an experiment to do. Every day, note down in your diary for how long you could sit without any difficulty. One week, load your stomach well. Another week, take less salt. You will find that you have improved, because when there is less salt in the blood it can flow freely. Salt makes a difference in the volume and density of the blood. In the same way, when you are fasting you can maintain an asana or posture for a longer period. However, these rules can be practised later on. At the beginning, the most important thing is do not try to maintain a strict posture. Simply observe what is happening in your body and what is happening to your mind. Observe what is happening around you. If you want to scratch the body, do it, but observe it. If you want to move your position, move it, but observe it.

Observing each and every behaviour of the body is the first thing in meditation, but definitely you should aim at sitting in one position for one hour without any difficulty. If you can sit in one posture for one hour, without any flinching or movement, half the meditation is accomplished. Therefore, you should practise pawanmuktasana every day. Give up salt once a week or much better, miss a meal once every week. We call it fasting. According to your capacity, you must miss one or two meals every week and you will have wonderful results.

The second factor is the seat on which you sit. Take a woollen blanket, fold it into eight folds, spread a cotton piece on it and sit down. The less cushioned it is the better

it is for asana. You will be steadier. Many people use foam rubber. I don't mind it, but your body minds it. A blanket is best, but don't sit directly on it, cover it with a piece of cotton cloth.

The third factor is that when you are sitting for meditation, the dress must be loose so it does not obstruct the free circulation of blood. Tight underwear, pants or brassieres should not be worn during meditation. The type of dresses that you have for yoga here, such as leotards, hamper blood circulation. However, what I am wearing, this dhoti, doesn't interfere with the circulation, it's so free. If there is any pressure on any part, the circulation will be hampered.

Next, when you sit for meditation you must face north. The North Pole is a centre of the earth's magnetic field. The brain, which is an important centre for meditation, and the centre of this magnetic field are interconnected.

The fifth factor, take a good bath before meditation, of course, not in winter but in all other seasons.

The sixth point, before sitting for meditation, practise bhastrika pranayama – ten, twenty, thirty, forty, one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred times, a whole lot. You will be able to sit in one posture for one hour.

Apart from all this, there is another aspect. When you sit for meditation, you are trying to control the mind. But what about the control of eye movements, rapid eye movements? Eye movements affect the retina and the retina affects the brain. If the eyes are moving and vibrating, the brain is also vibrating. Therefore, before you go into meditation, you must steady the gaze.

There are three ways of steadying the gaze. One, by looking at the tip of the nose. Two, by fixing your eyes in mid eyebrow. Three, by placing one point in front of you and looking at it with unblinking eyes. It is called *trataka*.

If the eye movements can be controlled the vibrations can also be controlled. When vibrations are controlled, then the frontal part of the brain becomes active. The frontal brain and the posterior brain are the two brains and they depend on voluntary and involuntary motions. Both these brains have two different computers.

It is not merely the incapacity of the body; it is the incapacity of the brain due to which you are not able to sit for one hour. Merely training the body is not enough. You should be able to train the brain. The brain has the centres which regulate the muscles, the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the cardiac system, all the systems. Have you ever noticed that sometimes you change your position twenty times at night and sometimes you wake up in the same position. Is it due to the body or due to the mind? It is due to the mind.

Therefore, you must not ignore the role of the mind in posture. Don't say, "My body is stiff." Those who have a stiff body have a stiff mind and those who have a supple body have a supple mind. Those who have a steady body have a steady mind and those who have a flinching body have a flinching mind. Therefore, mental unity is more important.

Finally, I want to tell you one thing. Practise *sirshasana*, the headstand. This is one of the most important asanas for all that we have been discussing. *Sirshasana* will help you greatly in the preservation of semen, in maintaining *brahmacharya*, in concentration of mind, in overcoming depression and in maintaining a steady posture in meditation. It can be practised by both men and women. It will not only help in yoga, it will also help you in your physical health. *Sirsh* means topmost, superior or head. Therefore, *sirshasana* means an asana which is superior, which is topmost and which is practised on the head.

Q. What is the difference between one-pointedness of mind in creative acts such as painting and one-pointedness of mind in meditation?

Paramahansa ji: There is not much difference. Music, art, painting, contemplation, devotion, dedication to a particular purpose, karma, karma yoga or concentrating on a sound or symbol in raja yoga, they are all the same.

People have different temperaments. Some are dynamic by temperament, they proceed through karma yoga. Some are emotional by temperament, they proceed through bhakti yoga. There are mystics by temperament, they proceed through raja yoga. There are people of rational temperament, they proceed through jnana yoga. These are the different traits predominant in people.

One can't be purely dynamic, emotional, mystic or rational. One may be predominantly emotional. He can take to bhakti yoga. Bhakti yoga incorporates music, art and painting. Kirtan for instance, which is also a very important way to develop dhyana or meditation. You take a few sounds and continue to repeat them in musical rhythm. Again and again, you sing it in a different tempo. That brings a great change in the brain and the body.

There are various ways to transcend the grossness of the mind. When you do so, you can feel your guru as if he is actually there even though he is physically not there. You can see colours. You don't only think, you can see. There is a difference between vision and thought. "I think black colour" and "I see black colour" are two different things. When you see black colour, then you are in meditation. When you are visualizing a flower, a person or a landscape, you are not just thinking them; you are seeing them. You can see the distance, the colour, the different objects, as if the landscape was there before you. That is also a path of yoga.

Q. In the non-tantric disciplines, does the awakening of kundalini happen unconsciously or not at all?

Paramahansa ji: Awakening of kundalini is possible by various methods. You can awaken the kundalini by tantric and non-tantric methods. It can be awakened by karma yoga, by bhakti yoga. It can be awakened by pranayama alone.

There are two important ways to awaken the kundalini. One way is called the direct method. The other is the indirect method. Pranayama is the direct method. The experiences are explosive. The results are very quick and fast. The expansion is very rapid. The mind attains quick metamorphosis. Not everybody can face it. Many people get baffled.

You see, when the kundalini wakes up there are certain experiences that you have. They are very difficult to handle. Sometimes these experiences come very slowly and sometimes they come in quick succession. The emotional evolution, the mental evolution is sometimes slow and sometimes very quick. Therefore, many times we are not able to understand or handle the experience. Thus, the path of pranayama, though it is a short path, is considered a very difficult one.

The paths of bhakti yoga and karma yoga are considered comparatively safe and mild. Two examples come to my mind. In the Old Testament of the Bible, there is a story. The angel appears and is asked to show the light. The angel says, "You can't see the light." On insistence, the angel removes one veil. A little light is seen. On further insistence to show the total light, the angel removes the second veil. In this way, the angel keeps removing veil after veil. When the angel removes the seventh veil, nothing can be seen, which means that the experience could not be handled by the human mind.

The second example is from the *Bhagavad Gita*. Arjuna requests Krishna to show the cosmic form. Krishna says,





God is beyond speech. God is beyond mind. God who is formless. God who is nameless. God who has no particular place. God who has no denomination. God who is as big as the cosmos and smaller than the atom. Such a funny God man has discovered.

“Difficult. You can’t see it.” Arjuna insists, “No, please show me the cosmic form.” Krishna says, “You cannot see the cosmic form with this mind.” Arjuna says, “Please, Lord, show me the cosmic form.” So Krishna shows him the cosmic form. Arjuna is terrified. He is perplexed. He does not know what to do. He closes his eyes. He says, “No, I don’t want it any more. Please, close this television.”

The awakening of kundalini is one of the most important events of human life. It is that point where your individuality has fallen flat. Therefore, the tantric and non-tantric methods are equally effective. However, the tantric methods are more scientific because in tantra, there is no scope of suppression. There is no scope of dispersion of energy. In tantra, there is no fighting with yourself. There is no antagonism between yourself and yourself.

In non-tantric methods, there is antagonism. One mind wants something, the other mind says no. Thoughts come in your mind and you suppress them. You want to enjoy, the mind says, “No, it’s bad.” Are there two minds? No. There is only one. The same mind wants it and the same mind opposes it. Therefore, there is an antagonism in the mind itself. The mind is split into two and the split becomes greater. That is schizophrenia.

When you oppose yourself, that is schizophrenia. When there is duality in thought and action, there is schizophrenia. I give you a very gross example. I want to drink wine, but my religion says it is bad. My tradition says it is bad. My tradition has taught me that it is bad. But my nature wants it. There are therefore two forces within me. The like, the desire for having it, and repulsion, due to the opinion that it is bad. There is a split and therefore there is schizophrenia in the personality.

In tantra, this thing does not happen. The tantra yogi says, “I want it so I will have it.” This is the tantric method where you are your friend and not your enemy. Where you accept life and do not criticize it. The whole world is split into two. There is guilt in everyone and there is complete sensual desire in everyone. You want to enjoy life, but you have guilt about it. Are you not going two different ways? Your desire is pulling you to the right and your guilt is pulling you to the left. You’ll be completely split into two.

This is how we go into spiritual life. I am not criticizing non-tantric methods. Non-tantric methods are mild methods. They do not put you into trouble. They are like beer. You drink a little bit, nothing happens. Even if you drink four or five glasses, nothing much will happen. However, tantric methods are like LSD. You have a little and you are out. If something is wrong, it is wrong. If something is right it is right, you can do nothing with it.

Man has always been adventurous. If man was not adventurous, he would not have come to this point of civilization. He has measured the oceans. He has calculated everything not only on earth, but even beyond earth. He has counted the elements of nature. And he has tried to discover his own nature as well. Maybe God is the greatest discovery of man. I don’t think anything beyond God can be discovered by man. Don’t you think that it is one of the greatest adventures? God is beyond speech. God is beyond mind. God who is formless. God who is nameless. God who has no particular place. God who has no denomination. God who is as big as the cosmos and smaller than the atom. Such a funny God man has discovered.

In the same way, awakening of kundalini is going to be an adventure for man. We do not know what we are going to face. Maybe people will fail. It does not matter. Thousands have failed in life. But ultimately someone will succeed. Therefore, it does not matter whether you use tantric methods or non-tantric methods. Continue your mission of awakening the kundalini.

Q. According to tantra, the preservation of the bindu is very important. Why? How can we learn about this?

Paramahamsaji: In tantra there are practices by which the preservation of bindu takes place. I will first go into the physiology of bindu. The passion first takes place in the mind. That passion excites the bindu in the brain. *Bindu* means drop. It does not mean semen. It means hormone. The place of origin of bindu is in the brain. When you have sexual passion, then the bindu drips from the brain. The hormones are then assimilated into the body and immediately into the testes. The spermatozoa are formed or in the ovaries, ova are formed.

Spermatozoa and ova are formed in the testes and ovaries respectively, but they are formed there only if the

bindu comes down, and bindu drops from the brain only if there is passion. If there is no passion the bindu will not fall. If the bindu does not fall, the spermatozoa and the ova will not be produced. If they are not produced the semen will not come out. That is the basic science behind preservation of bindu in tantra.

In the tantric system of copulation the falling of semen never takes place. That ability has to be acquired by the practice of vajroli by men and sahajoli by women. Vajroli and sahajoli are tantric and hatha yogic practices. In order to master these you should be able to master *kumbhaka*, retention, and *uddiyana bandha*. The practice of *moola bandha* is also very important. What is *moola bandha*? In between the urinary and excretory passages there is an area known as the *coccyx*. When you contract that, it is known as *moola bandha*.

Moola bandha is very important for controlling the falling of semen. However, in the feminine body it is a little bit different. In the female body, the lowermost part of the uterus is known as the *cervix*. The *cervix* is the actual point that is to be contracted in the feminine body. That is how *sahajoli* and *moola bandha* are practised by women. In order to practise *sahajoli kriya* and *moola bandha* you must first assume the asana known as *siddha yoni asana*. *Siddha yoni asana* is: press your left heel on the vagina. Place the right heel against the clitoris and lock the toes. Place a little pillow under your buttocks, thereby the pressure on the vagina is deepened. Then maintain the pressure on your knees. Breathe in, control the breath, press the knees and raise the shoulders, and contract the vagina, little by little. Do it a number of times, to begin with about thirty times. Go up to a hundred or even two hundred times. Every time you contract and for as long as you contract, you should hold the breath, but not for long. It should be ten, fifteen or twenty seconds. So, breathe in with one or with both

nostrils, as it may be. Practise *jalandhara bandha*, hold the breath, contract the vagina, not the stomach, not the abdomen at all. Do not do it with force. Do it very slowly. This is known as *sahajoli* coupled with *moola bandha*.

This particular practice will help female yoginis. This will control the production of ova and thereby, the energy will be conserved. Now, for men. They should practise *siddhasana*. *Siddhasana* is: press the perineum with the left heel. Press the upper root of the urinary organ with the right heel. Lock the toes. Place a little pillow underneath the buttocks. Place the palms maintaining pressure on the knees. Breathe in, either with one nostril or with both. Retain the breath, practise *jalandhara bandha*. Now concentrate on the point which the left heel is pressing and contract. Hold the contraction. Then release the contraction. Release the breath. Practise this for about thirty times to begin with. Go up to a hundred, two hundred, even three hundred times. This is known as *moola bandha*. Just *moola bandha*.

In the female yogini, *sahajoli* and *moola bandha* are combined, but in men it is not combined. For *vajroli*, again maintain *siddhasana*. Breathe in, retain the breath, concentrate on the point where the right heel is pressing the root of the urinary organ, just contract a little. Practise thirty times. You can go up to a hundred, two hundred, even three hundred. This is called *vajroli*.

Moola bandha is the contraction of perineum. *Vajroli* is the contraction of the upper root of the urinary organ. These two practices give control over the process of ejaculation. If you become a master of *moola bandha* and *vajroli*, ejaculation will not take place.

Now, there is another practice known as *vipareeta karani mudra*. It is the first practice of *kriya yoga*. By the practice of *vipareeta karani mudra*, the bindu is reversed. That means the process of assimilation of hormones in



the lower part of the body is reversed. *Vipareeta karani mudra* resembles *sarvangasana*, the shoulder stand. Lie down flat and first assume *sarvangasana*. Then gradually move your hands to your hips and slowly bring your body to a slanted position, so that the trunk is in an inclined position and the legs are vertical. In this position practise *ujjayi pranayama*. With the help of *ujjayi pranayama*, you create a process of reversal in the spinal column.

This was just a glimpse that I gave you. You can read about the subject in detail in the book *Moola Bandha*. All those who want to rise high in spiritual life have to tackle the real problem of life. Sexual life is a very important part of life. You cannot and should not ignore it. It is nature's obligation on you. Still, the fact is that sexual life does create dissipation of energy. We should not oppose this point. It is true that it does create dissipation of physical, emotional and mental energy. Therefore, everybody who is practising yoga should try to practise these *kriyas* so that they can fulfil the obligations of nature and so they do not oppose nature and at the same time do not dissipate their energy.

Q. Can an atheist practise tantra yoga?

Paramahamsaji: The path of tantra is meant for both, an atheist as well as a theist. In my opinion, nobody is an atheist. You may not believe in God, but you do believe in Nature. For me God is all-powerful, for an atheist Nature is all-powerful. Let us not talk about God or Nature, let us talk about the all-powerful. One who is all-powerful is God even if you do not give him any name. God and Nature are names. Therefore, nobody is an atheist. In any case, tantra is a path for atheists as well as theists.

Q. Can tantric techniques develop qualities or means to communicate with spirits?

Paramahamsaji: Tantra is a very vast science. What we have been talking about is the awakening of kundalini, but in tantra there are ways in which the mind can be blown to any dimension. The mind can be detached from the body. The spirit can be completely materialized or dematerialized. It's a very difficult science. What you are asking can be done, but I do not want to go into details about it in this meeting because our subject matter is tantra and meditation.

If you have another seminar on tantra and spirit, I will tell you about it. The mind can be transmitted just like radio waves, electromagnetic waves or laser beams. Mind is not emotion. Mind is not the thinking process. Mind is energy, shakti. If you are able to handle the mind you can expand the mind, you can extend it and it can transcend the barriers of time and space. For that, there are different tantric practices. But you have to know how to apply them. These applications are to be learnt only from a teacher who knows. The mind can travel into any realm of creation, even into the fields where spirits live. For that, you will have to tune the mind. You will have



to convert the mental energy. Then, it becomes more efficient and competent.

There is only one realm where the mind cannot go. It cannot go to the realm of God. The mind cannot go to the realm of samadhi. The mind cannot reach nirvana. It cannot reach salvation or moksha. But otherwise, the mind can go anywhere.

Q. Yoga has eastern origins. For a European wouldn't it be better to look for a spiritual path that has origins in his own environment?

Paramahamsaji: This question has been answered many times by many people. I will repeat an important point and I hope you will not mind it.

Where did Christianity come from? From the Occident or from the Orient? Well, that is the answer. We must remember that a science is a science, neither Oriental nor Occidental. A great western scientist discovered electricity, but we use it in the Orient. If anybody in India says that electricity was discovered in America, should we use it or not, I will say, "Idiot." In the same way, if somebody asks, "Yoga comes from the Orient, should we use it or not?" I will say, "Another idiot."

Now, an important point. Every individual has an inner man and an outer man. The outer man comprises of the body and the senses. The inner man is thought, emotion, feeling. Food is for the external man, comfort is for the external man. However, these don't make a person happy. There are thousands of people who cannot sleep on a cozy bed; there are thousands of people who cannot eat well. It is because the inner man is sick. And there are people who can sleep on the bare floor in winter, without even a rug, and they sleep very well. I have seen people who don't have enough to eat, but they can laugh in their hearts because their inner soul is healthy.

The Occident has always created things for the external man; the Orient has always created items for the inner man. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, yoga, tantra, they are all Oriental. Total, complete. Biology, botany, electronics, computers, aeroplanes and automobiles have been created by the Occident.

There should be an understanding of both because both are sciences. Spirituality is the science of the inner man and materialism is the science of the external man. You can't ignore materialism. The Occidental races have perfected a particular science. In the same way, the Orient has given light to the inner mind. On account of materialism there is tension, frustration, schizophrenia, insomnia, hypertension, rheumatism, and so on. Medical science is failing. It is able to help the body, but not the mind and emotions. If your stomach is bad, you can take medicine. But if you are unhappy and don't want to eat, is there any medicine that can help you? So, remember that there are two important aspects of human life. One is the material aspect, comfort. The second is peace, *shanti*. If you have comfort and no *shanti*, you go crazy. If you have *shanti* and no comfort, you can exist, you can survive.

In India, we have survived because we have *shanti* even though no comforts. So, let us have a handshake between the two, the outer man and the inner man. Don't bring the Occident and the Orient in the picture. Science is beyond geography and history. It belongs to humanity and it is universal.

Now, coming to history. Yoga is not only Oriental. Previous to Christianity, there was a Celtic culture in Europe. The Huns invaded India in the seventh century. India was militarily very powerful at that time so it repelled the invasion. For one full century, India continued to repel it. Ultimately, the Huns made their way to Europe and completely trampled over Europe. Due to this, the

Celtic culture was totally crushed in Europe. The Huns are responsible for this material culture of Europe today. It's not the Celtic culture. It's not Christianity. It is the dynamic aspect of the Huns' life.

The Celtic culture was a very spiritual culture. It was very tantric. If you go to the Nordic regions, the Scandinavian countries, you can study their symbols. They talk about *ida nadi* and *pingala nadi* in the form of snakes intercrossing each other. I have a very big establishment in Scandinavia under Swami Janakananda where many swamis live. I visit these countries often. These people have carried out many researches into the ancient Celtic culture and have come to the conclusion that it had elements of tantra and yoga.

Now, let us come to the later ages. I am talking about Christianity. It came from the East. It came with elements of yoga and spirituality. The Roman Catholic system is that. However, in the course of time, these cultures completely perished and today we don't even believe what we had. Therefore, you must remember that India is responsible for conserving and protecting the spiritual culture.

Europe could not protect it. The Huns completely crushed it. The historical accidents completely destroyed it. This did not happen in India because in India there is a special tradition. That is the guru-disciple tradition. The guru's knowledge goes to his disciple and this disciple gives it to his disciples. That is how the tradition is kept alive. There is another tradition in India. The swamis and sannyasins live a particular type of life. There is no dissipation in their lives. There is no dissipation of energy in their lives. They don't get into politics. They one-pointedly follow one path, called the path of knowledge. Most have small ashrams. The people give money and maintain those ashrams. The swamis live a very simple life and devote themselves to study, research, thinking and contemplation. There is no



First of all, we will have to understand the process of metamorphosis. I believe and I see that matter is indestructible. I have studied physics and philosophy both. I am talking about the point of physics here. Of course, I know that ultimately matter does not exist.

big management, secretariat or administration in these ashrams. Just a few swamis, they eat, live and study. That is why these people have been able to maintain the science in spite of political changes.

Whatever political change may take place in the country, we are not affected, because we don't belong to politics. We belong purely to the spirit. We talk of the spirit. We don't talk of the Cabinet and the Parliament.



That is why we are never disturbed by any political force. Thus, yoga has now come from India, but it existed in Europe many centuries ago. Unfortunately, the Europeans could not protect it but the swamis in India could protect it. So what we bring to you is your own thing.

Q. Swamiji said yesterday that only the present is in our hands. It's obvious that the past has gone and it is clear that there is no point in complaining about the present. But what about the future? Isn't it rather fatalistic to renounce it? In the sense of going forward?

Paramahansa ji: When you take care of the present, the future will take care of itself. This is the statement of a great thinker. I can't say anything beyond this. Every point in the present is a point of the future. If we do not take care of the present and only anticipate the future, then we will be missing an important link.

We don't have to be a fatalist. At the same time, it is not necessary to become a person who is living in fantasies. We have to be practical in the present. If I am taking my present step properly, naturally I will reach the next point in the future without any difficulty. This is what I was talking about yesterday – people who anticipate the future and ignore the present. Of course, the present is nothing but the future coming closer. In fact, there is only past and future. Past and future are divided by a particular point which is called the present. It is not static. What is present now becomes past and what is future is going to be the present. We always see time as two important facets divided by one point.

Time is nothing but a concept of the mind. Otherwise, time doesn't exist at all. If there is no mind, there is no time. The division of time is a division in the mind. What is past? What is future? And what is present? Try to understand this in terms of the mind, not in terms of time. If you understand this, there is no reason to be a fatalist. In fact, nobody is a fatalist. We are dealing with life. Some people deal with it by thinking of the past and some deal with life by thinking about the future. However, there are some people who deal with life by thinking about the present. History has proved that they have been very successful. Therefore, take care of the present, the future will take care of itself.



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Inauguration Speech

Torino, April 1981

Hari Om Tat Sat

We are meeting here on this beautiful evening in order to inaugurate this very important seminar in this beautiful city. Last week we were in Milano and two days ago we were in Greece, and again we are back in Italy to attend this seminar.

Yoga has definitely influenced the whole humanity today. Thousands of teachers all over the world are engaged in teaching yoga in every country. Doctors and research scholars are incessantly studying the effects of yoga on the human body, mind and emotions. For some time yoga remained the monopoly of ascetics, but today it is for the whole humanity.

People are thinking of introducing yoga into drug rehabilitation centres all over the world. Yoga halls are being opened in prisons everywhere. It appears that yoga has touched every aspect of human problems. On one hand, yoga therapy has become a very important aspect of yoga teaching today. On the other hand, yoga is being used as a very important tool of relaxing muscular, mental and emotional tensions. However, what has been disclosed to humankind in the last one or two decades is the possibility of evolution of consciousness through yoga practices.

There is no doubt that physical disease and mental problems are great difficulties faced by humankind. But the greatest problem is that of human consciousness. How can we expect to get out of the problems of life unless the whole consciousness is transformed? This is the greatest problem that yoga is going to solve for all of us. Consciousness is an important matter in the practices

of yoga, particularly dhyana yoga. Awakening of kundalini is nothing but a stage of evolution in the scheme of mind and consciousness. Behind the body and mind, there is a universal and fantastic awareness within all of us.

This great awareness is not realized by us because it exists like an iceberg, only a little is seen and the rest is completely concealed. Man knows his thoughts and emotions, but not his awareness. Thought is not awareness. It is an aspect of awareness; it is a manifestation of awareness. This awareness is the most important subject matter of dhyana yoga and kundalini yoga.

Very soon, yoga teaching is going to transform itself all over the world. We will have to teach our students and disciples the way by which they can become more and more aware of their consciousness. It is here that yoga immediately transforms itself into the science of tantra. It is by the science of tantra that the purpose of yoga will be fulfilled. A scientist can never liberate energy unless he breaks matter. In the same way, we cannot manifest or liberate shakti unless the gross matter is broken.

The manifestation of shakti within us has to be accomplished by the practice of yoga in the form of tantra. The mind has to be expanded and the energy has to be liberated. One of the most important subjects of yoga and tantra should be and will be expansion of consciousness. Our mind and consciousness move within a limited area, the area of sensory awareness. We are not able to experience beyond what the senses provide us.

The senses alone feed our knowledge; the senses alone feed our mind. We are not capable of expanding the mind and thereby experience without the agency of the senses. We are aware of names and forms that we see, but we do not even know that forms which the eyes cannot see exist. There are non-empirical sounds and non-empirical forms. The first mistake that we have made

is that we have limited our knowledge and experience.

The sensorial barriers will have to be completely broken. This is possible only by transcending them. When the mind expands, then the energy is liberated. Energy is shakti; it is dormant within the matter that we are. At one realm the mind is matter. However, within the frame of mind there is unlimited shakti. Even as matter is converted into energy, the mind can also be transformed into shakti. Thus, the concept of mind, the concept of consciousness is completely different in yoga, Samkhya and tantra from that in psychology.

Those who have studied modern psychology do not understand the truth of the mind and consciousness because they understand the mind by its limited aspects. Our emotions and dreams cannot really indicate the existence of the mind or define it. The mind can be seen only when you begin to meditate. When you close your eyes and see the darkness, that is the mind. When you begin to see the light, that is the mind. When you see certain forms within you, that is the mind. When you begin to hear sounds within you, that is the mind. When you begin to see devas and angels, that is the mind. When you begin to hear voices within you, that is the mind. They are different manifestations of the mind.

The mind in yoga and tantra is known as chitta. The closest translation of chitta is awareness, and awareness is homogeneous. Its nature is totality. However, we understand the mind only when we are unhappy or happy, when we love or hate, when we are sorry or angry. It is then that we become aware of the mind within us. All these things are negative proofs of the existence of mind.

Tantra is a wonderful science because it has practices by which it explodes the whole mind. To explode the mind one has to generate energy or prana. When prana is generated, then the mind becomes clear and explosive.

I am just giving you a glimpse of the yoga of the future because the brave man of the future is going to discover the consciousness behind the mind. The brave new race that we are talking about may emerge a hundred, two hundred or three hundred years later, and it is going to understand more about the consciousness than the body.

The body does not affect the mind; the mind affects the body. The body does not contain the mind; the mind contains the body. We will have to understand the superiority of consciousness over matter. That has acknowledged by the physical sciences. What does physics say? Is matter superior to energy or is energy superior to matter? Is matter different from energy or energy different from matter? Physical science has arrived at an answer to this. Similarly, in spiritual science also there is a question. Is body superior to mind or mind superior to body? Is body different from mind or mind different from body? Is the body not a manifestation of consciousness? Or is consciousness a manifestation of the body? Tantra has given the last word on this. In tantra, two realities are posited. Shiva and shakti, matter and energy. At the universal field they are known as Shiva and Shakti; on the individual field they are known as ida and pingala. When union takes place between Shiva and Shakti, ida and pingala, then a third force is released which is known as the kundalini.

I do not know if you know about the erotic art in the Indian temples. If not, you must study them. In the temples of Khajuraho and Puri in India, there are erotic statues showing the interaction between man and woman. They represent the union of the two opposite poles of nature. Shiva and Shakti are two opposite poles of nature. They represent time and space respectively. I am not going to define time and space here. If you want to understand what time and space are, you will have to study Vedanta, Samkhya and quantum physics.

Time and space are two opposite poles of energy, like plus and minus. Time represents the positive energy and space represents the negative energy. When these two energies unite with each other, an explosion takes place. In the physical body there are two nadis which flow within the framework of the vertebral column. These nadis emanate from the bottom of the vertebral column and terminate at the top of the vertebral column in the medulla oblongata. Although these two nadis terminate in medulla oblongata, union does not take place between them.

The purpose of yoga is to unite these two nadis. Yoga means union. What is union? You see the switch, that is union. You turn on the switch and that is union. When there is union there is illumination. You switch off; the light goes off. Ida represents chitta, consciousness. Pingala represents prana, the vital force. Ida and pingala do not only exist in this physical body, in the whole universe there are two eternal realities.

Go to any point of matter, you will find duality. At one moment the matter is unmanifest, and at another moment the matter explodes. When matter explodes, energy is released. How does matter explode? You should study physics, but I am going to give you a little glimpse. Time and space are the opposite poles and the universal mind is like proto-matter. The centre of the universal mind is the nucleus. This nucleus is the latent matter. When time and space come close to each other and unite in the nucleus, then the object explodes, matter explodes, there are stars, suns, moons and galaxies. The same thing happens in meditation and in kundalini yoga. When you close your eyes and concentrate your mind on one point, somewhere at that time you are bringing time and space closer to each other, like Shiva and Shakti. The moment the mind is united, explosion begins. The brave new race

that I am talking about is going to explore the possibilities of energy behind the so-called matter.

In 1968, when I toured all over the world, I talked about hatha yoga. In 1981 I am talking about kundalini yoga. Today, millions and millions of people all over the world want to understand what the reality is. Of course, religions have tried to give the answer, but one has to find the answer for oneself because the thing is in itself, your experience alone counts, not what is written in the books.

We have to fulfil the need of our generation and posterity. If yoga teachers like us fail to come to the rescue of the human race, then the future generations will reject us just as they have rejected religions and philosophies today. We want to know the truth; we do not want to be told what the truth is. We cannot see bacteria without a microscope. You can't detect radio waves without a radar. How can you then understand the infinite with this finite mind? Talk about it as much as you want, that is just like mad men talking pointlessly. Experience is important. If you have no experience, you have nothing.

I remember an incident eight years ago. I was travelling in South America and my neighbour on the plane was a research scholar. He was researching on Indian sweets. At the time of lunch, I gave him a sweet called rasagulla. He asked me what it was. I said, "You have done the research." The poor man had not experienced it!

Knowledge is one aspect, experience is another aspect. Knowledge is limited, it has barriers. It has its own falseness, but experience can never betray man. When this experience dawns it is immediately intimate. Therefore, it is important that we first transform the very quality of our mind, so much so that the mind undergoes a state of metamorphosis. This is what the yoga teachers will have to qualify themselves for. After this they no longer remain yoga teachers, they become guru. In the last few years, I



have started to talk about this all over the world and I find that people understand it. I am not telling something new; I am saying what is already on the mind of everyone.

So, we have two things before us. How to meditate and how to awaken the Shakti. The greatest question and problem before every aspirant is, how to meditate? You close your eyes, you withdraw yourself within, but you don't know where to go. You take your car out on the road, but you don't know where to go. Where you have roads, you have somewhere to go. Imagine that there is a

five thousand square mile desert all around you. No roads and no footpaths, and you have a car or a horse. Which way will you go? If you are guided by the star, then you go the right way and it does not matter even if you are in the desert. However, you must know the star. Not every star will do because they change their position every day. There is only one star which is always there at the same place throughout the year. And what if the star is covered with clouds, which way will you go then? That's exactly what is happening with all of us.

The pole star which is always fixed is there, but it is covered with the clouds of distraction and disturbance. This endless turbulence. How to silence the turbulence? How to rend the clouds asunder? This is the most important subject matter in meditation. Once you know the way, and once you know the experience you can expect, you will straightaway reach nirvikalpa samadhi. Meditation is an art. It is not just closing the eyes.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Meditation

Torino, April 1981

Hari Om Tat Sat

Last night in my address I posed two problems which we shall be discussing in this seminar. The first was how to meditate. The other was how to awaken the Shakti. I have written a lot on meditation in the last twenty years, but we shall discuss this point in a fresh way.

Before I tell you how to meditate, I must make a very important point clear to you. There is no such thing as mind control. And if there is, it is very dangerous from every point of view. You can control your emotions, you can control impulses, you can control your fluctuations, but you cannot control the mind. To control the mind is to control the great Shakti. There is also another important point you must remember. When you are trying to control your mind, you are trying to create a split in your personality because within yourself there is only one factor and not two. One part of the mind becomes antagonistic to another part of the mind. That is what you are doing in mental control.

This is precisely the reason why people go crazy and go to mental hospitals. For example, if there is a particular emotion in your mind which you don't like but you desire, you oppose that emotion. If the emotion is very strong, there is a great pull. You are either tossed towards the emotion or you are trying to pull yourself back. That affects your personality and your mental behaviour. Therefore, when I am talking about meditation, be sure I am not talking about mind control. For me meditation is a way in which you realize the whole of your generating force. In fact, meditation should not be understood from

a religious point of view. Just as scientists are discovering various functions of the physical body, in yoga we are trying to discover the various functions of the inner consciousness. The human brain, according to scientists, is said to be one-part conscious and nine-part unconscious, which means that we are operating one part of the brain and nine parts of the brain are beyond operation and remain silent. These nine parts contain the latent faculties of man.

In the course of evolution, in a few million years the brain will evolve to its fullest potential, it is believed. In the course of a few hundred thousand years in the past, man has come to the current point of evolution in the brain. However, the yogis believe that this pace of evolution can be accelerated by certain methods. The natural evolution of the brain may take a million years, but if you know the technique, you can cut down the period to a few hundred years. It is for this purpose that they discovered the science known as kundalini yoga. It was discovered that by the practice of kundalini yoga the brain begins to evolve and meditation becomes spontaneous. And in the realm of kundalini yoga the practices of kriya yoga are supposed to be the most powerful and effective.

Now, about the practice of meditation. The first and foremost thing in meditation is purification of the nadis. Nadis are the pathways through which the energy flows in every part of the body. Even as you have electric cables running in your house for supplying electricity, in the same way within the body you have pathways through which the pranic and mental energy flows to every part of the human organism. Due to our carelessness, these nadis are confused or blocked. Our body is like a house which is not properly taken care of, where the electric cables are in utter confusion and the energy does not flow properly to every part.

The main nadis flow within the framework of the vertebral column. The two main nadis flow to the right and left within the spinal cord and the third one flows in the centre of the vertebral column. All three emanate from the root of the vertebral column and terminate at the top of the vertebral column. In the pathways there are four centres. These centres are like junctions. From these junctions the energy flows to various parts in the physical body. There are many thousand small junctions, but I am talking about the major junctions. These junctions are usually not working properly in people. In modern medical studies it has been found that these junctions do not distribute energy properly and thus the impulses are very weak.

When you practise any pranayama, say bhastrika, these junctions discharge very strong impulses. In medical examinations it has been found that when one is meditating, the root of the vertebral column discharges very strong electrical emissions. At other times these junctions seem to be completely dormant. Therefore, when we want to meditate the first preparation is purification of the pathways, the nadis, through which the energy or shakti flows to the higher centres.

The second preparation is to ensure that the posture is steady and scientific. There are three main postures that are recommended for meditation. One is the lotus posture or padmasana. The second posture is siddhasana for males and siddha yoni asana for females. The third asana is vajrasana, for all. The purpose of these postures is to block the downward passage of energy.

When you generate energy in meditation, it has to be carried to the upper centres and should not be allowed to be drained towards the lower centres. When you practise siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, you are blocking the downward passage through which the energy is drained

to the lower centres. This is the second point which is very important and about which you will have to think further.

The third point is the symbol, or as I told you, the star light. Everyone who wants to succeed in meditation should have a symbol for himself, but here comes a difficulty which we must discuss with a very open mind. Most of us are religious. We are either Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Hebrew or Parsi and all of us have our own concept of God. Christians have the concept that God is formless, therefore he should not be conceived in the form of any idol. The Muslims have the same concept. Thus when we ask you to concentrate on a particular symbol, you may have a religious conflict.

You may say that God is formless, why should we concentrate on a form. If we concentrate on a form we are idolaters. This is the one important point that one must clarify within oneself if one wants to succeed in meditation. Hindus also believe that God is formless and nameless. Truth has no form, truth has no name and truth has no dimension. At the same time, our mind must improve. If the mind does not have a symbol to meditate upon, where will the mind stay and where will you stabilize it?

So, let us set aside for the time being the conflict that our religion can create with our practices, because here we are not practising anything religious. We are trying to go in and discover the fantastic mind. There are a few types of symbols for the mind. One is the sound symbol, the other is the form symbol. The sound symbol is known as mantra and the form symbol is known as deity.

You can select for yourself either both the symbols or one of them. The mantra symbol is one of the easiest ways to achieve meditation. The sound is a type of vibration and when you create vibration with the help of a mantra in your mind, the whole consciousness begins to get concentrated and saturated. If your mantra is *So ham* and if you are

trying to concentrate on the vibration of *So ham*, in the course of time it helps you to withdraw the consciousness from every object and make it concentrated.

On this point a fantastic fact has been discovered by scientists recently. When you breathe unconsciously, then it is the smaller brain that records it, it is registered in the computer which is fixed in the inferior brain. We have been breathing since our birth, we breathe all the time, all the twenty-four hours. As we breathe 15 times a minute and 900 times an hour, it adds up to 21,600 times in twenty-four hours. If you become mindful of your breath, of every inspiration and expiration that comes and goes for one, two or three hours, then the activities of the inferior brain are suspended. This conscious and mindful breathing develops the activities in the superior brain.

Another important event has also been examined. If you concentrate or if you become mindful of every breath, the electrical impulses in the chakras or the junctions become very powerful. Not only that, it has also been found that the central nervous system or the autonomous system becomes active, which means that the frontal side of the brain comes into operation.

For convenience, we classify the brain into three parts. The inferior brain represents the animal incarnation or the animal awareness. That means the inferior brain is the seat of instinct. The midbrain is the seat of reasoning or intellect and the frontal brain is the seat of intuition or jnana. As we evolve, the superior side of the brain should evolve and the inferior side of the brain should be suspended. In order to evolve the superior brain, mindful breathing has been observed as a very powerful method.

Now, in meditation our purpose is to develop this higher mind which is the seat of intuition. In order to awaken the frontal brain, the higher brain, if mindfulness of the breath is practised for an hour or two every day,

that will create a stir in that higher brain. So, when you become mindful of the breath you should also become mindful of the mantra which should be synchronized with the breath. The ingoing breath and outgoing breath should be synchronized with the mantra.

Mindfulness of the breath is one of the most important yogic practices. It can be practised within the nostrils, it can be visualized between the navel and the throat, within the framework of the vertebral column or in both nostrils in the form of a triangular mandala. It can be visualized in any part of the body because prana and consciousness are present in every part of the body.

Mind and prana are present in every part of the body. That is the hypothesis. Therefore, if you visualize the breath consciousness from head to toes or toes to head, it is perfectly all right. The breath consciousness can also be visualized in the form of a mandala. There are numerous mandalas. You can visualize the breath consciousness in the form of a triangular mandala, a square mandala or a circular mandala. You can visualize it either in the navel, the heart or the forehead. You can visualize one of these or all of them, a little bit of everything.

When you become mindful of the breath, then the mind is suspended for a moment. When the mind begins to suspend, then images begin to appear in the consciousness. When you begin to see images in the mind during meditation, it is an indication that you have transcended a particular state of mind. This has to be understood properly.

When you are practising mantra with breath mindfulness, a moment can come when images develop. These images indicate that you have transcended a particular state of mind. It means that your mind is now capable of developing form symbols. These form symbols are so numerous that I cannot describe them. You can



visualize your own guru, a saint, a visual symbol such as the candle flame. You can visualize a star, a lotus, a pond, a deity or divinity, it's not important. It depends on you what you prefer to have as your visual symbol. What is important is that the visual symbol which you have selected for yourself should be only one and should be of your choice. Many people visualize Om, some their guru, others their preferred deity. If there is any religious conflict in your mind, then select a yantra.

Yantras represent the mystic formation within you. They represent the archetypes that you have in your brain, and since the brain has billions of archetypes, you have within you billions of yantras. Without going into detail about yantras, I will suggest a few yantras for your success. Sri Yantra is very well known. Besides this there are other yantras as well. If you concentrate on a yantra, then meditation becomes very powerful.

An important thing that you have to remember is that when you enter into meditation, there comes a moment

when you become unconscious; you are completely unaware of external habits. At the same time, you do not know what is happening within you. Therefore, in meditation you must be careful that you maintain a point of inner awareness. That is the master secret. If you lose that inner point of awareness, then you are misguided in meditation and you go astray. That is precisely the reason why concentration should be done on an object. Right from the beginning up to the point of awakening of kundalini, you should never lose track of this point which represents your consciousness.

When you concentrate on that particular point, your mind will never stick to it. Different images will crop up. How to avoid them? It is very difficult. When you are concentrating on a particular point and your mind is dissipated, you can force your mind to come back and concentrate on that point. But there is a particular stage of mind when your will does not function. You become totally helpless at that time.

I give you an example. Suppose you are concentrating on your guru. You are trying to formulate his image in your mind. Your mind dissipates or disperses. So many other things in your life come to your mind. You pull your mind back and concentrate on your guru. If you are a person of strong will, you will do it. Up to this point, everything is all right. But suddenly you transcend the mind and enter into a sattwic state. Visions start appearing, you begin to see so many things. There is no guru any more; you continue to see these images for five, ten, fifteen or twenty minutes, and then you come out of your meditation. You feel sorry that you missed your image. This particular event is very difficult to manage. For this purpose, one has to follow another practice called trataka.

Trataka is a practice in which with open eyes you hold the object which you have selected for your meditation. A good practice of trataka makes you capable of maintaining the vision within the mind at different levels of consciousness. Therefore, you must practise trataka on the object which you have selected for your meditation for at least ten minutes every evening or night.

All of you must listen to this point very carefully because it is very important for everybody. This experience can come to you at any time, sometimes even before meditation. Not all of us belong to the same level of evolution. You may belong to a higher level of evolution, but you may not know it. I know many people who are very high on the scale of evolution, but they are not aware of it, they are ignorant of it. When they are exposed to a certain spiritual life by chance, suddenly things begin to happen. People who have been practising meditation for years don't get anything while this fellow who has been practising for only three or five days begins to experience things in his life, in his mind.

Therefore, I go by one faith. It is my personal conviction that everybody belongs to a higher state of evolution and

when he is properly exposed to spiritual life, yoga and tantra, he can experience anything at any time. I am talking about the materialization of mind. It is not hallucination. It is not imagination. The mind is capable of materializing itself like an object. Mind is not emotion, mind is not the thinking process and mind is not perception or cognition. Mind is energy.

The light that shines in this room is not electricity, but the light is a manifestation of electricity. The thinking process is not the mind, it is a manifestation of mental energy. Therefore, you must remember that the mind is capable of materializing itself in time and space. At a particular level of meditation, the mind can split itself. At that point, if you have been meditating on your guru, you see your guru face to face as though in flesh and blood.

Since the mind has the capacity to materialize itself, we must have a perfect visual symbol for us. If you do not have a perfect symbol or any symbol for yourself, the mind will materialize itself in any hopeless or frightful form. Therefore, I emphasize two things all the time. If you read my books, you will find that I emphasize only on mantra and a visual symbol. The visual symbol is the guiding light in man's life. Once this visual symbol comes alive in your life, you have received a high state in meditation as well as evolution. However, this is not so easy.

So, I have given you a few salient points on how to meditate, but there are a few other things which you have to know. When you sit for meditation the inner body temperature falls. This has been noted in scientific studies in recent years. When the temperature dips, the ageing process slows down. In fact, when the temperature dips, all the processes of the body, such as digestion, slow down. Therefore, those who have been pursuing the path of dhyana yoga must take a diet which is primarily predigested. The process of metabolism also slows

down, so if you insert many toxins in your body, it will find it difficult to metabolize them. Therefore, a dhyana yogi or a practitioner of meditation must look after his diet properly. The lighter the stomach the lighter is the mind. A light stomach is very important for meditation. Constipation must also be corrected.

Many people think that meditation has something to do with the mind and not with the stomach. They do not understand that we are homogeneous. The stomach and the mind are the same thing. Mind is all-pervading. The two forces, prana and mind, are permeating through and through the body. There is not a point in the body where there is no mind and there is no point where there is no prana.

A sincere meditation practitioner should leave at least three hours between a meal and meditation. The best time for meditation, in fact, is the same which is best for sleep. How nicely you sleep in the morning from four to five o'clock. That is the time when you have a high quality of sleep and that is time when you have the highest quality of meditation. The requirement of first class sleep and first class meditation are the same.

Another important factor has been noticed. As you go on meditating, the wave patterns in the brain undergo a change. As the brain waves change, the stress is reduced from different parts of the body and the blood pressure falls. When the blood pressure falls there is a feeling of total relaxation. Therefore, meditation in the higher stages must be done in padmasana, siddhasana or siddha yoni asana. At the same time, foods that bring down the blood pressure should be avoided. This little piece of revelation should be enough for all of you.

The final point. As a race, we are advancing in our external realization. We have gone far in our scientific advancements and have developed technology and the



external material aspect of society. However, it seems that in the last few thousand years we have not stirred a bit on the spiritual plane. It seems that in the last few thousand years our consciousness has been very static. It has remained at the same point, it has not moved.

We have changed the manners of our body, we have changed the ways of dressing and living, we have changed the system of housing and civic styles, but the awareness has not changed. The little that it has changed is because of the natural law. Why has it been like this? Why have only a few people received enlightenment? Are only a few people destined for illumination? Is truth the destiny of only a few selected people? Is truth only a destiny for those who are pure and divine? Or is enlightenment the birthright of everybody?

In my short span of life, I have come to this point of realization: man is born for enlightenment. Enlightenment is the purpose of human incarnation. If only he is exposed to a spiritual life, humankind can move from its present state of stagnation. Thus we visualize meditation as an important ingredient of social revolution.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Satsang

Torino, April 1981

Q. Will the spiritual evolution take place gradually through awareness or will man always remain tied to maya?

Paramahamsaji: There are two concepts about this. One is the concept of total liberation, which says that one day everybody will be liberated side by side, as if a bomb will explode and everybody will be freed. I will give you my opinion. Spiritual evolution is purely a personal matter. I don't think that everybody will be liberated at the same time because the whole universe is a process of evolution and continuity.

If you go to a forest, you see thousands of trees, plants, shrubs and creepers. They look almost the same, but every tree is evolving completely independently. The trees exist independent of each other. Similarly, every human being is responsible for his own evolution.

Q. Please explain the meaning of karma, and also of reincarnation, a term which is often misunderstood in the West. What is the relation between karma and karma yoga?

Paramahamsaji: This is one of the most important topics which covers the whole scheme of creation. Every action that we perform has an equal and opposite reaction. There is nothing in this world which is not subject to this law. You sow a seed and you get a plant, which produces seeds again. However, let us talk about karma and reincarnation with respect to man rather than discussing the whole creation.

Every moment of our life we are creating samskaras or karma. What we are experiencing in the present moment

is a result of our past experiences. If you think without any religious basis, then we can clearly understand that everything in our life has a relationship with the past and the past has a relationship with the present. The present therefore should definitely have a relationship with the future.

What I am at present is a result of the past and what I shall be in the future will be a result of the present.



Whatever we experience in life is accumulated in the subtle body. The subtle body is the reservoir of the totality of our experiences in this life and also our past lives. It is like a seed which contains the potentiality of the whole tree, and you know that every seed has the capacity to produce a different tree. These experiences which are stored up in the consciousness are known as archetypes. Yoga calls them samskaras. Just as a tree produces a flower or a fruit and ultimately the seed, whatever we do ultimately changes into a potential form, which is known as samskara. These samskaras influence the present incarnation and also future incarnations.

When the body dies the karmas do not die, just as a tree is destroyed by fire or felling but the seeds that it has produced continue to produce other trees. In the same way, after death the causal body and the subtle body move out of the physical body into a different field of existence. When they move out of the physical body, the causal and subtle bodies are in search of a place where they can express the karma. This is precisely the reason why every individual is different.

Now, in order to improve the nature of karma, we have to perform karma yoga. Usually when you perform an action, it is with a selfish motive, you have some interest in it. The motivated action leads to reincarnation. However, when you perform an action without personal egoism or ahamkara, without attachment, with total selflessness, then that karma does not produce any further karma. This particular science is known as nishkama karma yoga.

One's personality always evolves through each and every performance in life. Therefore it is said that everybody should try to transform his life by performing actions in the spirit of karma yoga. Whether one is a householder or an ascetic, it makes no difference. If they practise karma yoga, they will be purified.

Apart from the inner joy that it gives, apart from the freedom that you feel in the practice of karma yoga, the most important thing is that karma yoga gives you an opportunity to express yourself without creating a result. In the greatest book of yoga, the *Bhagavad Gita*, there are beautiful statements on karma yoga. Just as the lotus lives in water, one should live one's life in the same way. The path of action and the path of renunciation appear to be two different paths, but in fact both of them lead to the same point in life. However, the condition is that you will have to fulfil them in an absolutely sincere spirit. Yogis perform action for self-purification and for the fulfilment of detachment. You can perform an action by the body, by the mind and by the senses as well, but the purpose should be a very clear purpose: purification of the self.

These statements have come out of the *Bhagavad Gita*. I would suggest not only the questioner but everyone to read the *Bhagavad Gita* and meditate on the truth pointed out in relation to karma yoga. One important thing that has influenced me, greatly impressed me and charted my life is a statement from the *Gita*, "The doer is someone else, you are only the instrument."

For many years, I was very confused about action and reaction, my involvement and role, but when I read that particular passage in the *Gita*, everything became clear to me. In the scheme of great planning you are only the instrument, you are only the channel, you are only the agency, you are not the actor, you are not the karta, you are not the doer. Then why do you posit yourself? Why do you impose doership on yourself? The great Nature is fulfilling all the requirements necessary for the universal drama. Therefore, in order to become free from the link of this great chain it is necessary that you will have to transfer the idea of doership.

If I say that only the external guru is real, it is not correct. If I say guru is only internal, it is not practical. The external guru cannot guide you to the ultimate and the internal guru you cannot communicate with. How are you going to solve this puzzle, this problem?



Q. We often talk about spirit guides and of people who can get in touch with such entities through the medium of automatic writing, etc. How valid is this? What is the difference between a spirit guide and a spiritual guide?

Paramahansaji: The guru is an inner fact, within you lives your guide. Guru is not an external entity. Whether you talk about a spirit guide or a spiritual guide, nothing is external. All these things, automatic writing and so on, are your own expressions and manifestation. There are many levels of your own existence which you don't know. Man has various bodies, visible and invisible. What you see now is one level of your experience and existence. You have many other levels of experience and existence. However, behind this existence there is one guiding factor in you, which is known as intuition. This intuition is revealed to various individuals at various levels of their existence. That intuition is not the absolute truth. At various levels of existence in this particular body or in different bodies the intuition is revealed to everybody.

When a clairvoyant makes statements or does automatic writing, they are being directed by that particular level of intuition. In the lower level the intuition is mixed up with the intellect and instinct. At higher levels it becomes comparatively free from the intellect or instinct. At the highest spiritual level, in the life of saints, it is only intuition which functions, not intellect and instinct.

When you develop a spiritual inclination in your life, then you try to go in search of a guru. And you begin to realize that the guru is within you. However, there is another truth about it. In spite of the fact that I have said that the guru is within you, can you hear him? Can you understand him? No. Many times instead of hearing the guru, there is some lower power that we hear. Thus an external guru comes into the picture.

It is not the external guru who guides you. It is the inner guru who is the guide, but the external guru is like a detonator. Just as you may have a bomb planted at some place, but you can't explode it unless you open the detonator. The external guru helps you to communicate with the internal guru. This is a very confusing subject for the West. Many people of higher reasoning also cannot understand what we are talking about.



|| *One's personality always
evolves through each and
every performance in life.* ||

If I say that only the external guru is real, it is not correct. If I say guru is only internal, it is not practical. The external guru cannot guide you to ultimate and the internal guru you cannot communicate with. How are you going to solve this puzzle, this problem? Therefore, the yogic traditions have come to help us. Develop a relationship with the external guru, become his chela or disciple, express yourself and you will find there comes a time when your inner guru begins to awaken.

This inner guru is the inner voice in every individual. This inner voice is the inner light in everybody. This inner guru is the inner guide in everybody. Nobody in the whole world exists without this fact, but still everybody is misguided in life. Is it not funny that you have light and

you can't see anything? Is it not funny that you have an inner guide and still you are going the wrong way? Is it not funny that you have a costly diamond in the pocket and still you are starving? This joke is due to improper handling of the affair.

The moment an expert comes, he tells you that it is a diamond worth billions of liras. His mere presence has made a change. It was a diamond, it is a diamond, no change has taken place, but you brought an expert into the picture. You had the light and you have the light, still you are stuck in the dark. You brought an expert in the picture and you begin to use the light and stop stumbling and faltering. It is true that external gurus have their own limitations because they live in the physical body. They have karma. If they did not have karma, they would not have been born. Since they have karmas, they should have both types of karma. Still, if a guru is an expert in his job and if he can properly handle you and if you allow yourself to be properly handled, you can be fashioned and defashioned. Behind the veil is the light, but that curtain is a solid iron curtain. That curtain is the curtain of *avidya*, ignorance. That curtain is the curtain of *maya*, illusion, which everybody has in the realm of consciousness. Unless maya and avidya are removed, you can never see the light and you can never hear the voices.

Who will remove this veil? It is the external guru who can do it. In yogic scriptures, different types of gurus have been enumerated. There are twenty-four classifications of gurus. Out of these twenty-four types, you have to select one type for yourself. So, the conclusion is that whether it is clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, psycho-telekinesis, spirit writing, automatic writing, materialization of spirit in any form, or any kind of prophetic statements, all these are nothing but expressions of your inner guru at different levels of your accomplishment.

Impressions...

In memory of Swami Satyananda Saraswati

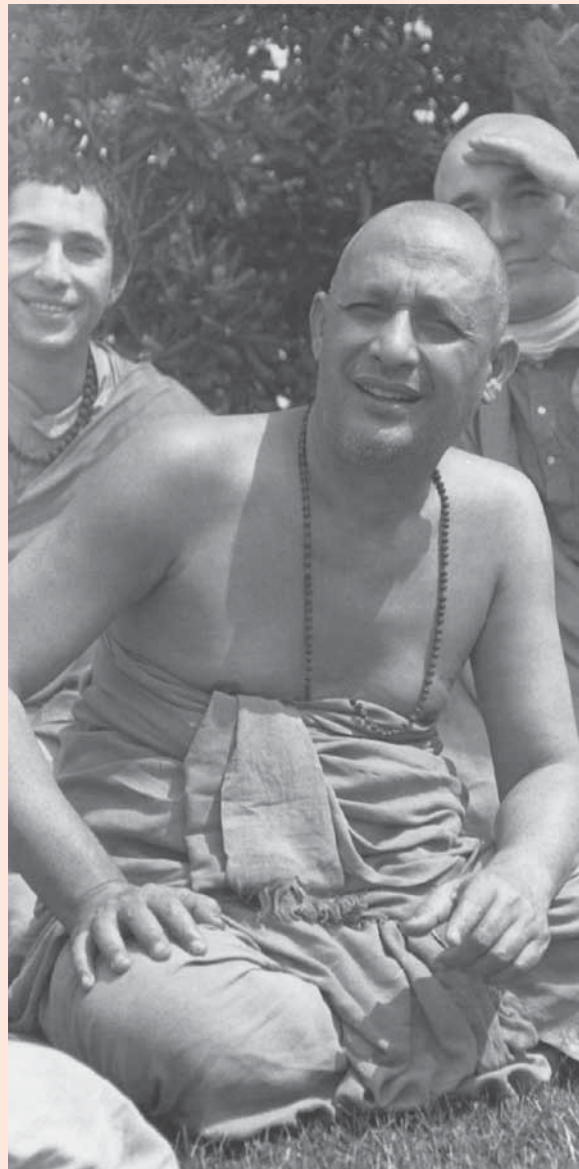
Swami Ishananda Saraswati

Many years before I began to practise yoga and to know about the existence of Paramahamsaji, I received, by dream, a message: “17 September 1982, your life will be changed.”

In 1982, Swami Satyananda came to Italy and exactly on 17th September, during a yoga program conducted in San Sicario, near Turin, I met him. I received a great gift, a personal interview in which Paramahamsaji spoke to my soul demonstrating that he knew my thoughts, emotions, feelings in such a specific and real way and in accordance with my own nature that even I did not know.

From that moment on, I never felt alone. For twenty-seven years of my life, Paramahamsaji has been with me and in me. He supported me in all my hard times helping me to overcome despair. He taught me to be glad in nice times, to laugh at myself, to go on with will, strength and determination to succeed in my own objectives. He has been constantly inspiring me to overcome doubts on the yogic path and giving me, through his teachings, every time I needed, the right answers about material and spiritual questions.

Through dreams, more than during meditation, he has been sending me his indications and messages: the name ‘Kalpa Vriksha’ for our yoga school. More



important, the dream in which I received poorna sannyasa diksha on the night of 30th November 2005, when at Rikhia Paramahamsaji nominated Swami Niranjan as his successor.

I will never stop thanking God for the enormous gift to have had the presence of Paramahamsaji in my life. Even if I feel immense pain because of the physical loss, I know that our relationship goes on at a different level and that always and with greater intensity, I will receive his guidance and blessings.

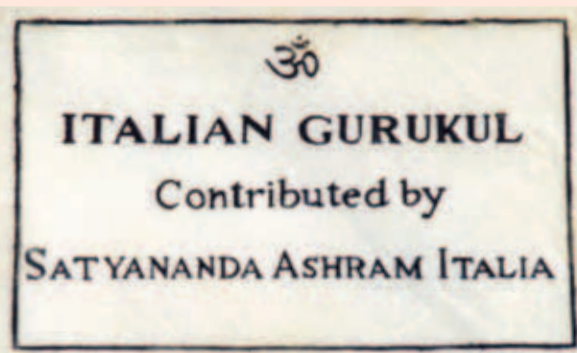
Inspiration of Swami Satyananda in our lives

Swamis Uttarkashi and Anusandhana

The arrival of a guru in one's life can be like a whirlwind, a tornado or an earthquake and so it was with our meeting with Paramahamsaji way back in 1981. We had been feeling the need for a guru and had been anxiously waiting to meet one for quite a few years. Then suddenly, almost out of nowhere, Swami Anandananda phoned from Turin and said that Swami Satyananda would soon be in Rome for a few days. This was the first indication of what was to be such a sudden, thunderbolt change in our lives, because neither of us had the means to get to Rome at that moment. But “So what!” we said and off we went, though it did not seem at all the sensible thing to do. However, the wisdom of it had its roots in something inner and more intuitive and the pull to go and meet a swami, a true guru, a paramahamsa of such spiritual heights was like an irresistible magnet for us. From then on, many things which seemed impossible became possible.

The meeting with Swami Satyananda turned our lives inside out, the initiations he gave, the precise instructions he imparted and just meeting him and looking into his bright, lively eyes, gave a new spark of energy, a new meaning to every action, a new approach on how to relate to the journey of life, to its evolution and purpose. And it was love at first sight!

Back home the rhythms of our days changed radically from being just a family group, mother, father and children, etc., to becoming an active yoga centre with people coming and going from all walks of life. They just appeared out of nowhere to learn the teachings of Paramahamsaji and to master the techniques which bring about inner peace, awareness and the experience of something we all have inside of us but cannot reach without the key given by someone like Paramahamsaji. Another beautiful part of it all was that none of this cut us off from everyday life, but also included the entire family, who slowly but surely took on the yoga practices of Satyananda Yoga and eventually became disciples first of Paramahamsaji and then of Swami Niranjan. Indeed, four generations of our family have actually taken initiation from them.



Our home became an ashram formed around the family group and Paramahamsaji always showed his approval of this. Yoga courses filled the day and every Saturday we began the regular sessions of mantra and kirtan, all rather new to Italy at that time. All this was crowned by two visits of Paramahamsaji to our ashram home in Florence, one in 1982 when he personally founded the Satyananda Ashram of Florence and then with a seminar in 1983. A very great blessing to all concerned!

During the years all this developed, the connection with Paramahamsaji deepened. We felt him in every decision we made, be it regarding family matters or other aspects of life. He has been spiritually present during our happiest moments as well as during dire illness and difficulties. The sankalpa to follow his every indication towards spiritual awareness and to teach yoga and serve others still forms the core of our lives, today more than ever. As Swami Sivananda affirmed, Swami Satyananda is a great example of someone who had the 'Nachiketa quality' to continue working in the direction of the spiritual goal, in spite of life's troubles and distractions, never to give up one's spiritual practice and higher aspiration, not even in the most difficult of moments, and understand the meaning of each and every event and action and the deep spiritual meaning of man's life on earth and his relationship with the universe and with God. In this regard, his has been the greatest inspiration in our lives and, as he once said to us: "It is important to maintain simple living, high thinking." May we pray that we never forget the deep relationship and connection with such a beloved guru!



Swami Satyananda in Italy
1982

1982

Paramahamsaji arrived in Milan on 15th September. He was received at the airport by Swami Anandananda and many other swamis and disciples.

Torino

After a brief stopover, Paramahamsaji drove to Cesana Torinese in Torino district. There, amidst the scenic beauty of pine trees and mountains, he presided over a four-day seminar on 'Kriya Yoga' held at Hotel San Sicario.

Swami Yogamudrananda came from Switzerland and gave classes on kriya yoga. Swami Santaram (Spain), Swami Pragyamurti (London), Swamis Vasishthananda and Arundhati (Newcastle), Swami Bhoomananda (Switzerland) and Swami Yogabhakti (France) were also present. Paramahamsaji gave daily lectures and satsangs dealing with various topics on kriya yoga. During the program Paramahamsaji gave mantra diksha to many aspirants and initiated ten aspirants into karma sannyasa.

Trieste

On the 20th, Paramahamsaji drove to Trieste with Swamis Yogamudrananda, Anandananda, Mandalananda and Hansaswaroopananda who accompanied him throughout the Italian tour. He spent the day in Trieste where he was interviewed by press and television and gave a lecture at the auditorium of the Dante Alighieri University. The auditorium was filled to capacity while Paramahamsaji delivered a lecture on 'The Purpose of Yoga'.

Lipica (Yugoslavia–Slovenia)

The same day Paramahamsaji crossed over the border by car and arrived at the town of Lipica. There he presided over a





three-day seminar on 'Hatha Yoga' held at Hotel Maestoso. Aspirants from Yugoslavia and Italy were present in large numbers, Swami Yogamudrananda and Swami Anandananda conducted classes and Paramahamsaji gave daily lectures and satsangs on hatha yoga, tantra and kriya yoga.

During the seminar Paramahamsaji was interviewed by the press, and many aspirants were initiated into mantra.

Rimini

On the 23rd, Paramahamsaji returned to Italy by car and presided over a three-day seminar in Rimini at Hotel Gran Britannia, amidst the splendour of the Adriatic Sea. Paramahamsaji crossed over the boundaries of hatha yoga and delved into realms dealing with the true spiritual quest. He spoke on Vedanta philosophy, Brahman, atma, the individual self, in response to a wide and intelligent range of questions from the people of Rimini. Many aspirants received mantra diksha and two were initiated into karma sannyasa.

Florence

On the 26th, Paramahamsaji drove to Florence where he stayed at the Regency Hotel. That evening Paramahamsaji inaugurated the new yoga centre directed by Swamis Anusandhanananda and Uttarkashi. The ancient city of Florence, homeland of great artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, was indeed a befitting surrounding for propagation of the ancient science of yoga. Paramahamsaji gave an illuminating talk on integral yoga at the Italo-Indiana Cultural Association run by Mr Naem. Many people were initiated into mantra diksha.

La Spezia

On the 28th, Paramahamsaji drove to La Spezia, a beach resort, and the last point on his Italian tour. 'Swara Yoga', an important branch of yoga scarcely touched by scholars, was the topic of Paramahamsaji's lecture. This was followed by satsang with the large crowd that was gathered at the Centro Yoga Integrale.

On 29th September, Paramahamsaji drove to Milan and boarded the plane for Athens.

Introduction to Kriya Yoga

San Sicario, September 1982

Hari Om Tat Sat

It is very good to see you all here at this wonderful seminar and a very nice setting. I never thought that this place would be so beautiful. Italy is really beautiful, there is no doubt about it. I was also born in such sylvan settings at the foot of the Himalayas in India in 1923. Gorgeous mountains, pine trees, pure rivers and total calm. Such was the place, such was the time when I was born.

When I was travelling by car yesterday from Milano via Torino and entered into this setting, I was taken aback and my memory flashed back to sixty years. I was very tired because I had been touring the United States for over twenty days and I was feeling sleepy. I dozed for a few minutes, but when I became aware of this setting, the sleep just disappeared. In fact, this is the great change I feel coming from America. There, it was hectic travelling for over twenty days, by car, by plane, attending meetings, always at a minimum distance of two hours. All these days I was seeing cars, buildings, factories and smog. And now I see pines trees.

The selection of the place has been wonderful, I can give thanks to Swami Ananda and his team. But more than that, thanks to all of you, for you have also made a very good selection of the place. Yes, people not only from Italy, but also from France, England, Switzerland, Greece, Spain and Yugoslavia are here, so it is an intercontinental yoga seminar.



It is in such settings that for many thousand years, rishis, seers and sages in India evolved a system for health, mental peace and spiritual evolution. For thousands of years, the Himalayas have been the treasure house of spiritual philosophy. It is there that the science of tantra, yoga and Samkhya were developed. The purpose of these sciences was to bring perfect health, mental equipoise and finally, self-enlightenment.

For an ordinary man, matter is inert. It is only what he can see with his own eyes. Water is just the water he sees, stone is just the stone he sees. He sees everything just as it appears to be to him. However, for a scientist matter is only appearance and not reality, so he analyzes matter and explores something which is not matter. In the course of his exploration, he discovers different forms of potential and energy within matter. In the same way, for most people, mind is thought, memory, emotion, passion, anger, feeling, etc. The body is an aggregate of bones, marrow, flesh, blood, nerves, etc. And life is just the span between birth and death. But for a yogi or rishi, these definitions of mind, body and life are not acceptable. He has come to discover that the mind is more than this, the body is more than this and life is more than it appears to be.

The body is an outcome of the combination of two forces, mind and prana. The physical body is composed of five elements of nature: ether, air, fire, water and earth. Out of the permutation and combination of these five elements, the physical structure of the body is formed, and within this physical body there are two forces known as chitta and prana, or mind and life.

The mind controls the sensations of sensory organs; the sound you hear, the touch you feel, the forms you see, the taste you experience, the smell you realize are possible on account of the force of chitta. This mental force, which is known as chitta in yoga and mind in English,



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is the controlling force of *jnanendriyas* or sensory organs of knowledge. Another force in the body is known as *prana*, which means vital force, vitality or life force. It is through prana that we live, move and act. The speech I am able to produce now, the hands you are able to move and the feet you walk upon, urination and evacuation, all these five motor actions are controlled by prana. Thus we have ten senses; five senses responsible for knowledge and five senses responsible for action. The *jnanendriyas* are ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose. The *karmendriyas* are speech, hands, feet, the urinary system and the excretory system.

To the rishis, these actions, these experiences, were not the ultimate forms of energy. Through their personal experience, they came to know that the scope of the senses can be enlarged, the scope of the mind can be expanded. Therefore, they experimented with many types of practices, sometimes strange and sometimes very systematic. Some practised the expansion of the senses and mind in a burial ground, some in a solitary forest, some used unholy means, others took the help of drugs.

If you carefully study the history of spiritual practices pursued by the rishis in the Himalayas for thousands of years, you will come across not just a few but many peculiar, eccentric as well as systematic practices. In the course of time they also came to understand that there are tantric and yogic practices which can be made available to every generation and every type of people.

There are certain practices which are definitely not practical for everybody. Suppose they said, "Go to the burial ground and practise this and this." Can everybody do it? Even those few people who try, go mad. Similarly with drugs. Even if we accept that drugs do expand the mind, but the outcome, the ultimate result is nothing but disaster. They destroy the nervous system and interfere with the natural laws of genetics and can create an

impotent race in the course of time. If drugs become widespread, maybe after a few centuries man will slide back to the same mental state that existed a few thousand years ago in the early period of evolution.

In the same way, there are many practices known to tantra which, in some way or the other, are not positive. For example, the sexual act is considered a very practical way of expanding the mind, but there is no historical evidence to prove this statement. For thousands of years,



trillions of people have enacted this act, but how many have been able to expand their consciousness? Those who have total control over their consciousness may be able to do it, but not everybody.

I do not deny the idea that sex is an energy, but I know that it is practically impossible for an ordinary person to

direct this energy to the higher centres for expansion of consciousness. How many people are born in the world who do not practise the sexual act without the idea of enjoyment and pleasure? How many people in the world can practise the sexual act devoid of the idea of pleasure? Maybe just a few. Therefore these paths and these techniques are not universal and cannot be applied to the masses. Out of many thousand practices intended to expand the mind and senses, to awaken the Shakti, the seers came to a conclusion about kriya yoga. Kriya yoga is a practice which can be easily adopted by every type of aspirant.

Most people have a distracted and restless quality of mind. They find it very difficult to hold their mind on one object for long. If you light a candle and go out during a storm, what will happen? The same thing happens to everyone when they are trying to concentrate. The fluctuations in the mind completely destroy the one-pointedness. It is in this light that the practices of kriya yoga have been designed. They are meant for a person who is unable to control, concentrate and stabilize his mind. It is meant for a person who is not able to sit in one posture for a prolonged period.

The basis of kriya yoga is hatha yoga. You know how important the practices of hatha yoga are. The postures and pranayama that we have been learning for the last few years are not just exercises. The postures are very important and necessary to help awaken the chakras. And pranayama is not just breathing exercise. It is responsible for awakening the sushumna nadi through which the spiritual experience takes place. Now we come to the most important scientific basis of kriya yoga. In the physical body, there are two forces known as ida and pingala, or mind and prana, or sun and moon. In between or besides these two forces there is a third force called sushumna.

In the spine there are six chakras. They are responsible for forwarding and distributing the energy. If these chakras are not functioning properly, an energy block forms. Out of these six chakras, the first chakra is at the bottom of the trunk. This base chakra is known as mooladhara chakra, which is situated in the perineum in the masculine body and at the root of the uterus, in the cervix, in the feminine body. To awaken this chakra, kriya yoga has included the practice of moola bandha. The second chakra is known as swadhisthana chakra or the sacral plexus. The practice of vajroli mudra is included in kriya yoga for the awakening of this chakra. In the solar plexus, behind the navel, is situated manipura chakra for which uddiyana bandha is included. These three chakras are very important; they are very intricate and very difficult to awaken. Then comes the heart chakra, anahata chakra, and then vishuddhi chakra. There are many practices included to awaken these. The sixth chakra is ajna chakra, which is the master chakra, like a monitor. Shambhavi mudra is practised for the improvement and development of ajna chakra.

When the chakras are purified, the flow of energy becomes very smooth. Once the flow becomes smooth, it is very easy to meditate. Meditation or dhyana yoga is the royal road for self-enlightenment. However, you cannot meditate by fighting with your mind, by forcing the mind or by coercion. When the chakras are awakened and the pranas are balanced, meditation takes place by itself.

Meditation is not an action, it is an experience. You must remember this very well. Sleep is not an exercise, it is an experience. Peace of mind is not an exercise, it is an experience. A tree grows for fifteen years and then fructifies; meditation is a fruit of kriya yoga. Many times we make mistakes by thinking that meditation is the fruit of meditation.

In kriya yoga, there is a very important practice known as khechari mudra. It is believed that by the practice of khechari mudra a particular secretion takes place from a higher centre. When that secretion is assimilated by the body, a change in experience takes place. The senses calm down and the mind becomes one-pointed.

This seminar will give you training in the techniques of kriya yoga. The purpose will not be to teach you how to control the mind, but how to awaken the inner awareness. There is a parable that comes to my mind. One dark night, a guru and disciple were travelling. In the darkness, when they could go no further, they went into a cave to take rest. The disciple was very scared of the darkness and from time to time he was lighting matches in order to avoid the darkness. When the match would go out, he would be scared once again. This continued for the whole night. Finally, the sun rose and the fear of the disciple was dispelled. When self-awareness becomes effulgent, the mind is of no consequence.

We do talk a lot about mental control. There is nothing wrong in it. It is a very good social quality, but to say that by mental control self-awareness will develop, is not acceptable. No matter how many matches you light, the fear will return, the agonies will return. The sun should rise. When you practise kriya yoga and develop meditation automatically, spontaneously, self-awareness becomes effulgent. Then there will be no mind. The mind is not responsible for higher awareness; you need a mind only to live your life. If you think that that experience can be had through the mind, you are making the first and final mistake. That experience is not a subject of the mind.

Along with kriya yoga, you will also be taught other kriyas, other practices, which will indirectly help you in practising kriya yoga. Every day there will be two sessions of questions and answers on sadhana, spiritual practice



and kriya yoga. The questions should be strictly restricted to the topic for which we are here. And those who would like to have an individual meeting with me, either for mantra, sannyasa or karma sannyasa, or for any other personal matter, should give their names to the person in charge.

I am very glad to address you on kriya yoga and to see all of you here, and I wish that these days which you spend in these wonderful surroundings will give you enough prana and energy for years to come. And welcome to everybody from everywhere.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Satsang

San Sicario, September 1982

Q. Swamiji, what does it mean to become a sannyasi?

Paramahansa: First of all, I will explain the meaning of the word sannyasa. *Sannyasa* means complete dedication. I will now give you an example of dedication. If you have a lot of money and you dedicate it for a charitable purpose, you create a charitable institution for that purpose. Although the money belonged to you previously, now, on account of your new will, it is only meant for the charitable purpose. You cannot spend that money for your personal purpose any more because it is not yours any more. In the same manner, everybody has certain specialities, abilities and energies within him. He uses these for himself, his family, children and his own selfish purposes. When he decides that he should use all his physical, mental, emotional and intellectual resources for the service of others, then he becomes a sannyasin.

In India, the lifestyle of an individual is classified in four stages. The first stage is accomplishment of knowledge. The second stage is fulfilment of desires and discharging of responsibilities. The third stage is abstention from active involvement. The fourth stage is total dedication to a higher purpose.

The tradition of sannyasa is a very old tradition of humanity, but now it is preserved only by Hindus. In all the ancient civilizations there were such individuals who completely dedicated themselves to the service of humanity in the form of knowledge. In ancient Greece and also in the Essenes cult the spirit of sannyasa is depicted. Later, Christians also accepted the tradition of sannyasa. The Christian sannyasins were known as monks. The

word 'monk' is derived from the Greek derivative *mono*, which means 'one'. Unfortunately, these monks have only remained as priests dedicated to a particular institution and not to knowledge. However, when the institution of monkhood was established, the purpose was to spread knowledge and not just create a religious organization.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is reference to the cult of the Essenes. The words 'Essenes' and 'sannyasin' are very close. I will give you a reference from these scrolls



which you may not be aware of. Half a century before the birth of Christ, near his village, there was a monastery of the Essenes. Suddenly the monastery became desolate and everybody left it. Five years before Christ's birth that

monastery again came alive and monks of the Essenes cult occupied it. The Essenes monks had the same tradition that we have in India today. They practised two stages, brahmacharya and sannyasa. When an aspirant was admitted to the monastery, to the institution, first he was given a probationary period. After a few years he was accepted as a sannyasin or a monk.

Five years before the birth of Christ, when the monastery was again reorganized, I think they knew about the coming of Christ. During his early life, according to records and documents, Christ lived in this monastery. Since he was a divine child, the head of the monastery recognized this at an early age. The monastery was also responsible for sending Christ to India, as India has always been the land where spirituality has been taught, promoted and practised.

Scientists are working to discover the secrets of matter. Politicians are working to create better political systems. Governments are working for law and order in the country. And religions are working to develop devotion in everybody. Thus there are cadres in society which fulfil the various needs of humanity, but who is going to work for the evolution of human consciousness and its potential? For this purpose, Hindus have always patronized sannyasa. It was not for a particular religion and not for a political creed. The sannyasin aims to realize something himself first and then he moves around the world for the evolution of man, for the evolution of society and mankind.

A sannyasin is not a revolutionary. He is not an anarchist or a cynic. He is very alert and very disciplined, with minimum needs, witnessing himself all the time, accepting poverty, shaving his head, abandoning caste marks, donning the geru colour, living on a pure, natural diet, and spending every thought on spiritual matters.

Q. What is the meaning of purging of the mind during meditation?

Paramahamsaji: Thank you for the nice question. When you are sitting with your friends, your thoughts do not trouble you. This means that you are constipated. When you go to the clubs and dance and drink and eat, there are no distractions in the mind. It seems that your mind is without any samskara or karma.

When you are enjoying the different pleasures of life, you do not see the distractions. However, the moment you hold the mala in your hand and practise *Om Namah Shivaya*, everything, all the distractions, all the karmas come up on the mental surface. At that time you do not only think important things, but even the most meaningless, insignificant thoughts come into the mind.

If there was a machine which could register the thoughts you have during mantra japa, you would be terrified to see the picture. No thought is complete at that time. And every thought is superseded by another thought. Reflections of the past, anticipation of the future and the situations in the present, all come in a very distracted manner. Sometimes you think, “No! I am not going to think anything.” Like a watchdog you are watching that no thought should come up and suddenly you find that you have been thinking. You get completely tired of these funny things. At the end of your japa, you are very frustrated.

All this is called purging. When you do not face the mind and you are in the company of pleasant objects, then you are constipated. You can also say that you are escaping from life, or rather you are escaping from the real picture of your mind. When you practise the mantra, it disturbs the mind and makes you face the mind. Mantra is a light dose, it is not a heavy or powerful dose. There are certain practices that can make you purge very heavily.

Sometimes you cannot handle the purging. Whatever comes in your mind during mantra japa is a part of your mind, your personality.

Whichever life you experience leaves an experience behind in the form of a seed. These seeds, these experiences become a part of your mind. They influence your behaviour, your personality, your responses and your aspirations. When you practise mantra, there is a progressive relaxation of these samskaras. Therefore, when you practise mantra, you should not stop this manifestation. If you practise your mantra with this attitude, in the course of time your mind will enter into meditation by itself.

There are other ways by which you can purge the mind very fast. When such purging takes place, people cry, howl, shout, jump, fall down. But what I have found is that many people cannot handle that. They end up in mental hospitals.

I have a philosophy, which I have established for over thirty years. I am a little bit of a doctor also. Suppose you are suffering from diarrhoea and you go to the toilet twenty times a day. I call it cleansing. Bad and fermented acid, broken mucous membranes and infectious matter is coming out. At the same time, I will ask you to not take every type of food. If you take meat or something which is hard to digest, you will continue to go to the toilet and there will be many other complications. So, I have two attitudes, one, to allow the purging, and two, to stop the purging. These two attitudes are practised side by side. If you are allowed to continue the purging, you will have another problem called dehydration.

In yoga, there are two types of practices. A guru must know this very well. If you face extreme purging of the mind, then there will be what we call dehydration in the form of dementia. Therefore, we have to take care of two

things at the same time, purging of the mind on one level and equilibrium of the mind on the other level.

When you are practising your mantra and purging is going on, you must also recheck your lifestyle, your intentions, desires and responses. Maybe there is something wrong in your lifestyle, thinking style, food style or behaviour style. Therefore, during mantra, do not fight with your mind. Do not check the purging processes of your subconscious mind. If the purging is too little, then you don't have to worry at all. If the purging is too much, if the distractions are too many, then it is better to do some sort of analysis. Analyze your relationship with your husband, wife, children and friends; analyze your attitude towards money, your profession and the problems and difficulties you are facing. If you find that anything in your lifestyle is unscientific, correct it a little. By this you will be able to eliminate the acuteness of purging.

There is another important thing to remember if you are doing japa. If you go on uprooting the grass from this valley, you will have to do it for a whole lifetime, because the grass is inherent, the foliage is inherent in the quality of the soil. If you see a person who is going on uprooting the grass and saying, “I am going to make the whole valley grass-free”, he is a foolish man. You cannot make your mind completely free from samskaras, impressions and distractions.

What we aim at in japa is to remove the shrubs and the forest, the dense things, so that the plot is clear for planting nice flowers, fruits and trees. Therefore, do not try to uproot the grass from the valley all your life, instead plant nice trees and take care of them. Clear up your mind a little bit through mantra, then develop awareness of a deity or a symbol. When the awareness of the symbol is overloaded by thoughts, clear it a little bit. That is all.

Q. Does meditation mean searching for God? What is important?

Paramahansa ji: Whatever we think about God through our imperfect mind, is not God. It is our own mind, because we have not developed our inner eye. We are blind people, therefore we cannot see. From this you understand how limited we are. Therefore, to say that I know God by this speech is a mistake.

When you give sight to a blind person he can see many things. He can see trees, mountains, rivers, men, animals, everything. Similarly, meditation opens the inner eye. With those inner eyes you have certain experiences. And then you realize the whole universe. You realize many vibrations. Then this experience stops and you experience your true nature, not your name and form, but your true nature. Then you begin to feel that you and the universe are not different. You experience the whole universe as your expression. Then there comes a moment when all experiences die. The vibrations totally stop. There is no consciousness of the self or anything. It is at this time that you have experience of the divine. The moment you have experience of the divine, everything stops.

You must remember that meditation is not closing the eyes. You cannot succeed in meditation only by closing the eyes and closing the mind. When meditation becomes deeper and deeper, you begin to be more aware inside just as you were aware of the objects outside. In meditation the awareness does not diminish. The only difference that takes place is that the external objects, the external universe made out of Prakriti vanishes. When real meditation happens, it is as if you have woken up from deep sleep. For one who is able to meditate, the experience of the world is like a profound sleep of ignorance.



Meditation in Sanskrit and yoga is known as *dhyana*. It does not mean 'thinking about', it does not mean 'contemplating upon'; it means 'total awareness'. Your awareness in conjunction with the mind and senses is able to experience this universe of objects. Your awareness in conjunction with the mind and senses is aware of time, space and object. When your awareness becomes free from the mind and the senses, then the perception of time, space and object stops. When your awareness disconnects itself from the mind and the senses, then

it is able to see inside. Therefore, in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, there are eight steps: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, which are the external practices; pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi, which are the internal practices. One cannot practise dhyana. Dhyana happens by itself. And prolonged and protracted experience of dhyana transforms into samadhi.

Samadhi has two categories, samadhi with a trace of ego and samadhi without ego. They are known as savikalpa samadhi and nirvikalpa samadhi. It is after you have attained nirvikalpa samadhi that you can experience the divinity in truth and in essence. Many times, or most times when people talk about God, that is hypothetical because the thought of God gives us peace of mind. When we talk and hear about God, it elevates our mind and life. If we do not talk and think about God, there will be more psychological problems and suicides. However, what we talk about God is just talk. Man has to search God. What your pandits, monks, swamis and preachers say to you about God is only nice pastime. We live in hell and talk about heaven. We are soaked in mire, but we are talking about a nice garden.

The purpose of human life is to know this. We have not been born to enjoy life, because the taste that you get from life is very temporary and ends in pain. Sensual pleasures of any type do not live with us for long. Our elders do not tell us the truth because if they tell us the truth, they cannot exploit us.

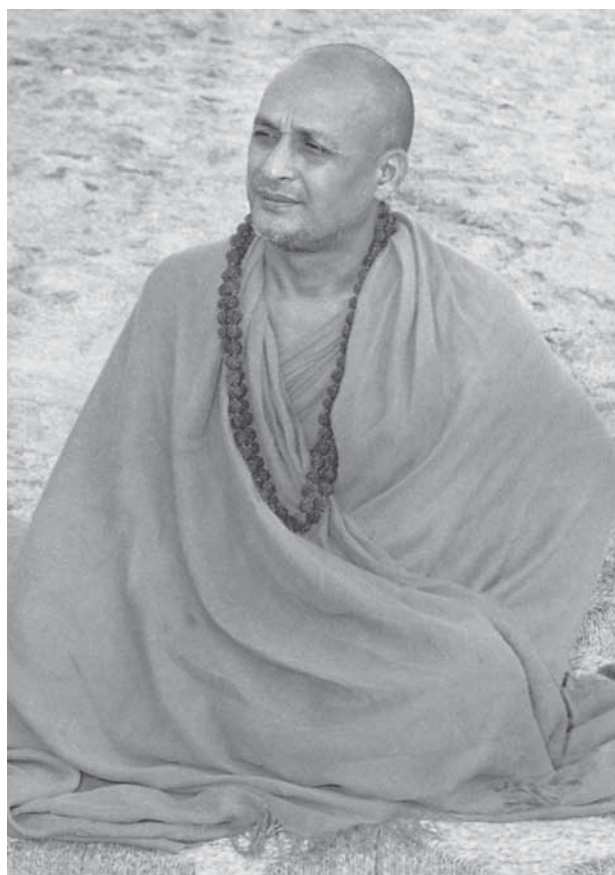
There are four important things one has to remember. These four things are common to men and animals. We eat and so do animals. We sleep and so do animals. We are always insecure, so are animals. We indulge in sexual life, so do animals. These are known as instincts, and these instincts are common to both humans and animals. Then what is the difference between the two? There has to be

something which should make a difference between man and animal. Yes, maybe man can make computers. Five thousand years ago, your ancestors could not make it. Given time and training, animals will also be able to make computers after twenty thousand years. There is only one thing which keeps man far from animals, the higher samadhi awareness. Therefore, since this question has been put, I take the opportunity to tell what has always been on my mind. Just going to a temple is not enough. Just repeating His name is not enough, just following a religion is not enough. Who knows, you may be wrong. We are blind, and our teachers are also blind. Blind leading the blind, so you end up in a ditch.

There is a parable in India. Two blind people decided to go on a pilgrimage. One of them was also lame. The one with able legs said to the other, "Why don't you ride on my shoulders?" This man was very grateful. Thus they proceeded on the pilgrimage. Suddenly they came across a ditch. The blind man stumbled and both of them fell. The lame and blind man asked, "Why did you fall?" The other man replied, "Because I could not see." Therefore, in order to lead others it is not enough to have the ability to walk, you must also be able to see.

The important purpose of life has to be decided by everybody who is seeking God and talks about Him. Otherwise, keep quiet, don't be a hypocrite. It is better to be a rank atheist than to be a hypocrite. At least an atheist is honest to his own convictions. A hypocrite knows that he does not know, but says he knows.

The highest spiritual experience of God is blissful. Even a glimpse of that is enough to soak you completely in ananda. There is a wonderful story, which is the basis of a great Upanishad, *Kathopanishad*. Upanishads are dialogues between guru and disciple related to the knowledge of the highest. In English you say God and in



Sanskrit we say Deva, Ishwara, Paramatma, Brahman. These are the various names designed for that highest reality. The speculative dialogue between guru and chela goes on in India for many thousand years. In the most ancient book written in history, the *Rig Veda*, a rishi asks, "Is there a creator? Does he know what he has created?" This question which is put in the Vedas is answered by thousands of books.

There is a beauty in the Hindu way of thinking. You people in the West cannot understand that way. Here you

are taught, "Supposing there is God." The Hindu way of thinking begins with, "Supposing there is no God." Now, if there is no God, there are many questions.

If there is no God, then the doubt comes, "Then what is all this? Who created it?" The reply comes, "Nature created it." Then there is another doubt. "Who created Nature?" The reply comes, "Nature is self-created." The next reply comes, "Don't call it Nature; call it God." Then ontological, theological and cosmological arguments are put forth. This is how they have been searching for God in India. Here, this does not happen. The hypothesis is the answer, "There is God, therefore there is God." The wonderful thing here is, that is the end of your search. You go by faith.

I have been thinking about this for the last fifty-five years. Belief has made us complacent. We are not seekers any more. We have become so arrogant about our belief in God. We believe that we have got fifty million liras in the bank. Actually, there is nothing. Now, in *Kathopanishad* the story goes like this.

There was a seer, a rishi. Once he thought of giving away all his belongings in charity to everybody. He donated each and every belonging including the cows, horses, goats and sheep. He had a son, six years old. He was looking at what his father was doing. He saw his father was giving away all his belongings, except himself, the boy. Perhaps he thought that his father had forgotten him.

He asked, "Father, unto whom will you give me?" The father looked at him and kept quiet. The boy asked a second time, "Unto whom will you give me?" The father still ignored. When he asked the third time, the father got irritated and said, "Unto death I give you." That was a sort of curse that he gave to his son. Therefore, the boy transcended his body and entered into the realm of death. In the domain of death, he could not find the Lord of

Death, who had gone for his daily rounds. This boy stayed there and waited for him for three nights. When the Lord of Death returned, he came to know that a child of six years had been waiting at his door for three nights. The Lord of Death became very uncomfortable and decided to grant him three boons. He went to the boy and said,



“I am sorry you had to wait three nights, I am very happy with you and I grant you three boons. Please ask what you want.”

The child asked him the first two boons. They were granted. I am not going to discuss these two because they are out of context. Then he asked for the third boon. He said, “My Lord, some say there is, some say there is not. What is your opinion, because you live in both worlds: this world where you come to take our life, and that world where you take us all. So, I ask you the question. Tell me, is there or is there not?”

The Lord of Death said, “You, child, are asking very big things. Great yogis, great masters, great seers and great men have not been able to get this reply from anyone. How do you dare to ask this question? Ask me for anything else and I will answer you. You seem to be a very serious child, so I don’t ask you if you want toys, but ask me for gold, silver, horses, elephants, damsels, land, property, eternal pleasure, long life, good health, many children, all I will grant you, but please do not ask this.”

The child said, “O Lord, are these things immortal? Will they stay with me for all time? You tell me that you will give me long life, but that long life will also come to an end. You promise me gold, silver, horses, elephants, diamonds, how long will they be with me? When pleasures come to man, they call him, but when man approaches the pleasure, they are gone. They are like a mirage. I want you to tell me that thing by knowing which I shall become immortal.”

Lord Yama tempted the boy in more than one hundred ways. But the boy did not at all deter from his stand. Finally, Lord Yama yielded. That is the subject matter of *Kathopanishad*. Lord Yama begins instructing that little child on the nature of the highest reality which is beyond mind and matter. In one of the beautiful stanzas he

says, “This path of reality is the razor’s edge.” It is very inaccessible, therefore remain alert all the time, and remain awake to your inner experience.

There is a book called *Razor’s Edge* by Somerset Maugham based on this sutra. A movie has also been made on it. You must read the book. The sum and substance is, we have to shift the emphasis, and the purpose of life has to be decided by us. My guru, Swami Sivananda, used to tell a story. I think that applies to all of us.

One day the lady of the house sent the servant to the market with a little money to buy vegetables. The servant took the money in the morning at nine o’clock and did not return at all. On the way he saw the hoarding of a circus. He was very tempted and went in. It was a three-hour show of lions, tigers, elephants and other animals. When the circus was finished, he came out and saw a wine shop. He went in there and had a few glasses. When he was satiated, he came out and passed by a cinema house. So of course he bought a ticket and went in. The film was very nice, two and half hours long. Finally he came out at five o’clock. By that time he had finished all the money and did not know what to do. He sat down by the side of the road. It was already late, the sun was setting. The lady of the house got worried about his absence and she also had to cook the evening meal. So, she went to the market and there she found the boy sitting by the side of the road and wondering what to do. She asked, “Where have you been?” He said, “Madam, I went to the circus and the pictures.” She asked, “Where did you get the money from?” He said, “The money that you gave me.” She asked, “And what about the vegetables?” He said, “I have squandered away all that you gave me.”

This story continues to take place even today. We are all in the marketplace and we are squandering away all that has been given to us.

Satsang

San Sicario, September 1982

Q. How can I practise mantra?

Paramahamsaji: When you have obtained a mantra from your guru, you must practise it correctly and systematically. The mantra should be repeated with the help of a mala when you are seated in the lotus posture, padmasana, or in siddhasana.

When you practise mantra with your mala, you should not try to concentrate very hard. In fact, I would advise you to practise your mantra and allow your mind to purge itself completely. Mantra purifies the mind by purging it of its contents. If you practise hard concentration during mantra, then your mind will be suppressed. Therefore, till you are able to achieve good concentration without any difficulty, you must pronounce or chant your mantra loudly. If your mind does not trouble you very much, in the course of time you must practise your mantra either by murmuring or whispering it, or mentally.

There are various ways of practising the mantra. You can repeat your mantra loudly, you can whisper your mantra or you can repeat it mentally. You can practise your mantra with the natural breath and you can practise it with your breath slightly deeper than natural. You can practise your mantra with ujjayi breathing, you can practise your mantra in khechari mudra by folding the tongue and sticking it at the upper palate and where the tongue presses the palate, you must feel the throb of the mantra. You can practise your mantra in various chakras. You can practise your mantra by feeling the throbbing in the mid eyebrow centre. You can practise your mantra

by feeling your pulse and with every pulse beat you can practise it. You can sing your mantra, you can do mantra writing also. There are many more ways of practising mantra. If you practise one type one minute, one type another minute, you can practise all types in half an hour without any difficulty.

In India, there is a tradition. Mantra initiation is taken in a peculiar way when some worship or religious ceremony is going on. People are singing, playing different instruments, and at that time, the one who wants mantra goes to his guru and he bends his left ear to his guru and the guru chants the mantra into his ear. The disciple hears that sound and concentrates on that sound.

The most important thing is that in addition to your daily practices, ten or twenty minutes as is convenient to you, once in a year you must set apart a few days – two, three, five or nine – and have a special practice of mantra. Suppose you decide to practise the mantra for nine days. During these nine days you must isolate yourself and stay in seclusion. You must eat a light, simple diet and easy to digest things like milk and fruits. During this period, no cereals, no grains and no meat of any kind, not even fish or eggs. You must fix two hours, four times a day for your practice. There should be a good interval between two sessions. After nine days of practice, on the tenth day in the morning you must only meditate. At that time you must completely control the mind. However, during these nine days you should not meditate and even if meditation happens, you must stop it.

These practices should not be done in harsh weather. When it is neither too hot nor too cold, and not too humid, that is when you should practise. In India, we have such a climate twice a year, in March and in October. You have to find when you can get such weather in your country.

Q. If there is little time in the morning, is it better to practise pranayama and meditation and leave asanas for the evening, or start with asanas and carry on the practice until the time is over?

Paramahamsaji: The beginner should practice asana and pranayama together. But when you are fairly advanced, you can make your own choice.

Q. Is yoga nidra a meditation practice?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga nidra is not a meditation practice. In fact, yoga nidra is more a practice for those who are not in a position to meditate. The definition of meditation in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali is, "In meditation the mind assumes one continuity." Another definition of meditation in the *Yoga Sutras* is that in meditation the mind becomes free from objective awareness. In yoga nidra, there is neither the flow of one object nor continuity. Yoga nidra is the most powerful practice of relaxation.

Q. Swamiji, what is illumination?

Paramahamsaji: The word 'illumination' means to enlighten an object or an area. Sometimes we use the word enlightenment also. What this means is to become aware of the inner consciousness.

The external world of objects is illumined by the power and faculty of the mind. If the mind loses that faculty, then the external objects are not known to us. The mind illumines everything in the world and experiences them through the senses. A blind person can have the knowledge of perceptions, but he cannot see them. A person who is deaf can have the knowledge of sounds, but cannot hear them.

The word illumination in yoga is known as deva. *Deva* means illumination. Now, how to see the inner objects, inner experiences and inner awareness? When you dream, then

a part of your subconscious mind is illumined. When you meditate, you see certain forms, hear certain sounds and have certain feelings. This is on account of illumination.

The mind is the illuminator. It has the potential to illumine the external objects as well as the internal. You know the world through the mind, that is called illumination. When the same mind is introverted or withdrawn, then it illumines the inner consciousness.

In one of the Upanishads, there is a wonderful dialogue on this subject. The disciple is asking the guru, "How does a man walk?" The guru replies that with the help of the sun he walks. The disciple again asks, "If the sun has set, how will he walk?" The guru replies, "He will walk in the light of the moon." The disciple asks again, "If the sun has set and the moon has set, how will he walk in the darkness?" The guru replies, "In the light of fire he will walk through the darkness." The disciple again asks, "When the sun has set and the moon has set and the fire is extinguished, how shall he walk in the darkness?" The guru replies, "In the light of the stars." Then again the disciple asks, "If the sun has set, the moon also, the fire is extinguished, and the stars are no more seen because of clouds, how then will he walk in the darkness?" The guru finally replies, "In the light of his own self."

The self projects itself outside and illumines the objects and thereby you know them. This self is known as mind in relation to the objects. When you withdraw your mind through yoga from external objects and fix it on the inner object, then this self illumines the inner consciousness. The first state of illumination is the external awareness. Through this illumination you know time, space and all objects. The second stage of illumination is the inner mind. When the inner mind is illuminated, you can see forms, hear sounds, you can feel bliss, you can know extraterrestrial objects. In this manner, there are seven stages of illumination beginning from objective awareness and terminating with the highest self-awareness.

Q. Could you clarify the effects of mudra?

Paramahamsaji: I will talk to you about mudra in brief. It will be good if you read the book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, in which there are greater details.

In India we have various types of mudras. In the science of dance we have hundreds of mudras. Through these mudras the dancer is trying to express the inner attitude. They express the quality of his emotion, his feeling and his intention. When a dancer is performing, he makes these mudras with the help of his fingers, eyes and body in general. There is a famous scripture called *Bharata Natya Shastra* in which sixty-four basic dancing mudras are explained.

Now, apart from the science of dance, there are the mudras of bhakti yoga. When you are practising your worship, you practise various mudras before your deity, expressing your devotion, emotion, piety, surrender and so on. In India, bhakti yoga is not only going to an altar, praying from a book and singing a song. When you go to a temple to conduct worship, or even before that, the science of mudra begins. During the period of your worship, you practise hundreds of mudras at various times. By practising these mudras, you are letting your inner feelings come out.

Then there are tantric mudras, which are infinite. There are certain mudras which you practise spontaneously when you enter into a state of trance. These mudras are very important in tantric practices because they relate to the energy flows in the body. There are two important things that you have to note about this: one, you practise a mudra and express the energy; two, you feel an energy and then practise the mudra. In the beginning, you practise the mudra and help the energy to express itself. Later, energy begins to express spontaneously and then you automatically practise mudras.

In tantra, mudra is considered to be the external form of a particular energy. According to tantra, every emotion

and expression is a manifestation of energy, sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Suppose you get angry. What do you do? You express it through a mudra. In the same way, when you love someone, you express your love through a mudra. These are external things which I am telling you in order to explain the subject. When you are practising sadhana, something must be happening inside. That is interplay of energy within you and you express it through various mudras.

There are hatha yoga mudras. They are related to the realization of the threefold energy within the body: ida, pingala and sushumna, which represent the mind, prana and spirit respectively. The mudras detailed in hatha yoga therefore represent the position of the mental force, pranic force and spiritual force.

To make it clearer, I will tell you about chin mudra. In this mudra you bring the thumb and the index finger together and leave the other fingers free. These three fingers represent the three gunas and Prakriti or Nature: time, space and object. The thumb represents the highest consciousness and the index finger represents the ego. When you maintain chin mudra, it means that you separate the three gunas and place the ego at the feet of the Supreme Being. This mudra can be performed in other ways also. You may join the thumb with the middle finger. This means the self interacting with the sattwic principle.

The hatha yoga mudras are practised in different ways. They are not only practised with the fingers. We know that the energy flows through the fingers, through the body and through the toes, and that energy is twofold and not singular. In kriya yoga we have a very important mudra known as vipareeta karani mudra. The intention of this mudra is to reverse the flow of ambrosia from the lower centre to the higher centre. Therefore, in various schools, such as dance, bhakti yoga, tantra and hatha yoga, mudras are intended to express the flow of the inner energy.



Satsang

San Sicario, September 1982

Q. Till now you have spoken of mantra as a process of purification. Can you tell us about mantra as a bridge between guru and disciple?

Paramahamsaji: I think devotion is the bridge between guru and disciple. Mantra can help, of course.

Q. Why do you give sannyasa to people who are married and who are householders?

Paramahamsaji: Sannyasa is an idea or philosophy. Just because you live with your wife or husband does not mean you are wretched. All bachelors are not genuine and all married people are not sinners. Husband and wife represent two opposite poles called Shiva and Shakti. You cannot have electricity if the two poles, positive and negative, do not unite with each other.

When I give sannyasa to people who are married, I expect them to practise the spiritual philosophy of union between the two poles very systematically and properly. Both of them can live the life of a sannyasin and help each other. That means they have to be very responsible towards sannyasa.

Q. How can we apply the practice of kriya yoga in everyday life?

Paramahamsaji: It is not at all necessary to apply the practices of yoga in your everyday life. When you practise yoga for some time, your awareness changes. This change of consciousness is not sudden. It is very gradual. You live your life with this changed quality of consciousness. That is how you apply it.

Q. What is the difference between kundalini yoga and kriya yoga?

Paramahamsaji: The purpose of kriya yoga is to awaken the kundalini by preparing the aspirant. In fact, every form of yoga is intended to awaken the kundalini. You can awaken your kundalini by selfless action or karma yoga. I think this is the easiest path. Similarly, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga and other forms of yoga are also intended to awaken the kundalini. But the practice of kriya yoga directly affects the awakening of kundalini. We do not call this kundalini yoga; we call it kriya yoga because there is a separate yogic system called kundalini yoga which is different from kriya yoga.

Q. Is illumination a gradual event or does it happen suddenly? Which path has the various yogic techniques to attain illumination?

Paramahamsaji: It depends on the person. Usually, it is a gradual process. In various lives you achieve degrees of illumination. The centre of illumination is chiefly ajna chakra.

Q. What happens after death to an enlightened person as compared to a non-enlightened person?

Paramahamsaji: Both reincarnate. They have to work out their further evolution. When one has attained the final stage of evolution, then one goes out of the cycle.

Q. Swamiji, we have just heard that Anandamayi Ma has left her mortal body. We all know that you have known her since your early age. Could you give us some light about the extraordinary phenomenon she embodied?

Paramahamsaji: This is news for me also. I did not know it. I met her when I was ten years old and she gave me a lot of spiritual encouragement.

She was born in the part of India which is now known as Bangladesh and right from her childhood she lived in a life of spiritual ecstasy. During her life she inspired millions of people to the path of bhakti. Her mantra was, "The talk of God alone is talk, everything else is painful."

She had an ashram in the same town where I was born and she used to visit that place once or twice a year. Indian people are very religious and bhakti margi by temperament. Whenever they hear about a saint or a divine discourse, they will always go. Before a real saint, a real sadhu in India, the richest and the poorest, a king and an ordinary person do not have any distinction.

Very few people in the West know that in India a saint or guru is considered above God, not below God. In the presence of a real sadhu or God-realized saint, whether a Muslim or a prostitute, a Christian or a meat-eater, a great leader or king, whoever comes, is considered equal, and they have to behave as if they are equal. This is precisely the reason why in India peculiar types of sannyasins are born, but the Indians are very careful in not offending them.

Anandamayi Ma was one among them. Wherever she went, whether it was a big man or a scavenger on the streets, they used to sit side by side before her. She was respected by every section of society, the political, the intellectual, the mercantile and the working class. She never discussed religion, but she always spoke with every breath about God.

Religion and God are two different things, they are not the same. God has to do with the heart of the devotee and not with the sanctum sanctorum. The heart of a true devotee is the moving temple of God and the sanctum sanctorum is the dead house of God. It is not bad to go to

the sanctum sanctorum, but one should remember that if one lives with God in his heart, it is the true temple.

Wherever Anandamayi Ma went, thousands of poor and rich people went to have her darshan. There is another belief among Hindus, that real saints do not need publicity. You don't need to blow a conch to announce the sunrise. In the same way, when a lot of publicity takes place about a swami or sadhu, Indian people become wary and cautious. Those who aspire to spiritual life, those who want to lead a higher life have to find things for themselves without reading publicity material. A God-realized saint should not be treated like a television advertisement.

Anandamayi Ma always lived in trance, in ecstasy; therefore, wherever she went, her arrival was never trumpeted. However, by evening time, you would find thousands of people crowding her residence. Wherever she lived, in whichever house she lived, it became a temple. She spoke very little, but by the glance of her eyes her devotees would get a comforting message, solace and the reply to what they had come for. *Anandamayi* means full of bliss and *Ma* means mother.

Q. Man accepts some things such as solitude, death, etc. with difficulty. What can yoga do to help?

Paramahamsaji: When you practise yoga, then you improve the quality of your mind and emotions. With the improved quality of your mind and emotions, you begin to accept many inevitable events. Many people in this world are worried about everything because man is a perfectionist. He wants everything to be perfect. If he sees something absurd, he does not accept it, he does not understand it.

The philosophy of yoga is related to the process of evolution. We believe there will always be idiots in this

world, existing side by side with wise people. Positive and negative forces will prevail, will exist side by side. When this is realized by you, nothing bad can disturb you.

Existence is the mixture of the three gunas, and they will be there all the time. If you pass a law that all criminals must be killed now, within five years there will be another tribe of criminals. You cannot eliminate the ever-surging process of Nature. You cannot eliminate death, and if half the people of the world became immortal, there will be great problems. Once upon a time there was a problem of mortality. Now there is the problem of overpopulation. Therefore, death and other adverse circumstances should not cause imbalance in the mind.

The most important philosophy of yoga is: you perceive the world according to the quality of your vision. As you grow beyond the boundaries of the lower self, the actions and reactions taking place in the mind have different interpretations for you. We know about hatha yoga and raja yoga, but yoga is mainly concerned with the depth of consciousness of man. It helps one evolve and have a better realization of the world.

Q. Saints and mystics of the West have become thus without practising yoga. Can yoga then be considered a spontaneous and natural way of human evolution?

Paramahamsaji: In the ancient tradition, even in Christianity, the practices of yoga existed. These traditions are now lost because the saints do not live any more, only priests survive. That has happened not only in Christianity but in Hinduism also. The Hindu priests also raise the same question.

In the Bible there is a very distinct reference to kriya yoga, nada yoga and samadhi, "By God, I swear I die every night." This death is not the ordinary death. Here 'death' indicates the total absence of objective awareness. It is not

important for me to reinterpret the Bible, because I am not an authority on it, but the Christian saints definitely practised yoga. They chanted the names, they sang hymns, kirtans, they practised penance, bhakti yoga, yamas and niyamas, and they slept on the floor. All these are forms of yoga. Hatha yoga is not the whole of yoga. Hatha yoga is a branch or faculty of yoga. When these saints meditated, what happened to their body? It became still. That is the definition of asana. In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the definition of asana is total stillness of the body.

As you grow in spiritual awareness, your practices change. There have been many saints in India who did not practise asana, they did not practise kunjal, shankhaprakshalana or neti, but just because they did not practise it does not mean that we should not practise it. If you want to follow the saints, you must follow them totally.

We are creatures of convenience. When guru drinks whisky the disciple says, "My guru drinks whisky, I can also drink it because I must follow my guru." When guru talks to women, hugs them, we can also do it because we have to follow him. But if the guru touches the high tension wire, you will not do it. You will say, "Oh, he is a saint. He can do it. I cannot do it." This is a very unfortunate way of thinking which happens in relation to guru and chela.

The saints in the Christian traditions were great yogis. One thing you should remember, neither Christ nor these saints were western. They had Oriental origins. They were not Roman Catholic. They were born Jews, but divinity does not belong to a religion. Incarnations of God, saints and apostles are universal beings.

Q. Can you talk of witnessing the body-mind relationship with regard to a past experience?

Paramahamsaji: We remember the experiences of the past, but we cannot experience them exactly that way. If



you tasted some food at some time, you had an experience at that time. Can you recall the same experience today without having that food? For this purpose, you must practise antar mouna first, make your mind an observer; whatever comes to your mind, you witness it. Do not withdraw your mind from any kind of experience. Do not involve your mind in any process of thinking. It is a little difficult.

When you lift your hand, you must know that you are lifting the hand. When you are breathing, you must know that you are breathing. When you are rocking, you must know you are rocking. When you are stable, you must know you are stable. To see everything that is happening, to see everything that is existing, to see that you are seeing, to see that you are seeing that you are seeing. Sometimes you think horrible things. Don't be agonized. Sometimes you see your guru, Krishna, Christ, it does not matter, it is not important.

If there is pain in the abdomen, you must know that there is pain in the abdomen, don't cry, don't scream. If you are falling asleep, you must know that you are falling asleep, that you are going, that you are gone. The attitude must be, "I am the seer, not the actor, not the thinker. I am not the karma, I am not the thought, I am not the emotion, I am not the feeling. I am just the witness of all that is happening in my body, in my mind." If you happen to see that a big ghost with teeth and horn, a fat belly and hideous face is coming to you, you simply say, "Okay, I am seeing it."

A disciple was practising antar mouna. He began to see that a river was rising higher and higher near him and he was going to be washed away. He began to think, "Oh, I am just witnessing everything that is happening." Next time he saw a beautiful damsel coming to him in the mood of love. He thought he is the seer and not a

participant. One day while he was practising antar mouna he went very deep and a vision came to him that a cable came for him saying his mother is dead, and suddenly his antar mouna broke.

One can practise antar mouna, remain a witness at all stages, but there are certain tendencies in a human being which are his weaknesses. They will always disturb him. That you have to be careful about.

Q. The tradition has it that children are initiated into the important yoga practices at the age of eight, but now some of the kindergarten teachers wish to apply them to children under eight, starting as soon as the child enters school. Is yoga applicable to them? If so, how?

Paramahamsaji: Children before eight have a different system, and therefore the teaching of yoga should be provided to them in such a manner that they can imbibe rather than learn. From the age of two, demonstration should be provided for the purpose of imbibing. The models should be provided to them in the same manner as you provide them toys to play with. Most yoga postures are named after animals and birds. So, the structure of asanas should be prepared in the form of models which resemble an animal, a human being and also the posture.

Children have a photographic brain system at a young age. Whatever they see is registered in a photographic manner. Therefore, whatever knowledge of yoga you want to provide to the children should be audiovisual. Many times children at the age of two or three see their parents; they cannot analyze them intellectually and they cannot even respond emotionally. They just see them and register them. Later, when they grow up, at the age of eighteen or so, there is a process of development of those

impressions. After the development of those impressions, they develop a personality based on the impressions provided by the parents. A baby at the age of one, or even when he is six months old, does not understand what his parents are doing, but he registers the impressions. This is very certain and nobody should doubt this event. You cannot hide anything from your children at any time, even during pregnancy.

Consciousness functions at various levels. Your consciousness is functioning on the intellectual level. If I murder someone, you understand it and then make a judgement that this is not right. Many times your consciousness functions at the spiritual level, the emotional level and at the schizophrenic level also. At the age of two, three, four, or even before two, your consciousness functions on what I would call a photographic level. This is called samskara.

If you want your children to imbibe yoga and then develop the impressions at a later age, after eighteen, nineteen or twenty, thus influencing their mind, character, personality and destiny, then you have to practise that yourself. Besides pictures, visual aids, children can also be taught through narration of stories. At that tender age, children may not be able to respond or react, but they definitely inhale the whole story, and from that they take the best or the gist. So, at the kindergarten level, through pictures, demonstrations and through narration of stories, you can definitely make children learn yoga.

When you narrate a story to a child, there are certain important aspects of the story and a general structure which children do register, but later, at the age of twenty or so, they can throw away the structure and just maintain the gist. That is the peculiar function of human intelligence.

Q. Please speak about control of emotions by a yoga practitioner.

Paramahamsaji: If you mean raja yoga by the word yoga, then I think it is better to say that emotions should not be controlled. Yoga means karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga. Each yoga has something to complete in your life.

Bhakti yoga channelizes your emotions. It should be practised before raja yoga or with raja yoga. Karma yoga helps you to balance the impurities of mind, the distractions of mind. If you practise the yogas systematically, then you will never come across the problems created by the mind and emotions in your practices of meditation.

Why we face the mind in meditation is because we have not treated the mind through bhakti yoga and karma yoga. In yoga, meditation is considered to be the highest point, but still I think that in the modern countries meditation is overemphasized and incorrectly emphasized. Meditation is a very high stage and therefore it needs a lot of preparation. If you do not practise the other forms of yoga, then you will have to face difficulties in meditation.

Karma yoga is the philosophy of your relationship with life. What is your relationship with everything around you and what should be your attitude to your work, family, children, problems, enemies and everything else? How should you react in success and failure, love and hatred, victory and defeat? This is very important. Karma yoga is the philosophy which fixes your relationship with everything else in the world in such a way that nothing disturbs your mind at any time, no matter what has happened to you.

In the same way, bhakti yoga is so important that without it you cannot properly balance your emotions. Therefore, we have to find out who to love, who can

accept all our love without reacting in a negative manner. Most problems which people suffer from today are the problems caused by love or the absence of love. Therefore, it is necessary to know how to train your emotions, as you train your mind. An untrained mind, untrained emotions and untrained drivers cause accidents. Therefore, in bhakti yoga the emotions are channelized to divinity, in the form of God, a deity or guru. If I love someone, he should not exploit me. If he will not exploit me, I will love him more and more. God does not exploit his devotee. In the same way, guru also should not exploit his devotee.

When you have practised karma yoga and bhakti yoga, and then you practise raja yoga, the mind automatically becomes quiet. It is because we do not practise bhakti yoga and karma yoga that there are emotional and mental problems in meditation. You must say, "Okay, let them come." Don't stop them, because stopping them will be the greatest disaster.



Q. Can you explain the meaning of the Shanti Path and the story of how it came to be practised in Munger. Also, what is the meaning of *Guru sharanam gachchami* and *Yogam sharanam gachchami*?

Paramahamsaji: *Shanti path* literally means 'peace chant'. They are ten in number. They are extracted and compiled from the various Vedas. By the Shanti Path we chant, we are awakening our dynamic willpower. At the end of the meditation it is necessary that the process of extroversion is gradual.

The lines *Guru sharanam*, *Satyam sharanam* and *Yogam sharanam* are not my composition; they are a creation of the disciples. *Guru sharanam gachchami* means 'I take refuge in guru', *Satyam sharanam gachchami* has two meanings, 'I take refuge in truth', or 'I take refuge in Satyananda', and *Yogam sharanam gachchami* means 'I take refuge in yoga'.

About two thousand five hundred years ago in India, Buddha was born. Thousands of people, intellectuals and laymen, followed him. There were thousands of sannyasins of his order. They had the prayer, *Buddham sharanam gachchami*, *Sangham sharanam gachchami*, *Dhammam sharanam gachchami*: 'I take refuge in Buddha, I take refuge in sangha, I take refuge in dhamma.' These prayers were chanted three times, and after this they would repeat their oaths or commitments: "I abstain myself from wine, flesh and women." There were five oaths and five commitments for householders and for the recluses there were ten. Of course, today all Buddhists don't maintain the oaths.

The disciples may be of Buddha, of Christ, of Sivananda or of Satyananda. They are all funny people. They first boost the image of the guru. When his image becomes very great, then they take the credit of his success saying, "I am Buddha's disciple."

The Real Purpose of Yoga

Trieste, September 1982

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thank you for your warm welcome. I have been to your beautiful country previously also, but I am here in this town for the first time and I find both you and your town beautiful. I have been wandering around the world for the last thirty years, just to pass on a little word of four letters, to every religion, to every nation and to everybody. And I have found that people in every country understand and accept this little word, yoga, in their lives.

There was a time when philosophers were making great research in yoga, but in the last three or four decades the men of science have dedicated their minds to the investigation of yoga whether it is in India, Europe, America, Australia or Japan. Many great doctors are working on the possible effects of the practices of yoga on the human body, mind and behaviour. In Australia, doctors are working on the possible effect and influence of yoga on cancer.

It is this yoga which I bring to your country, not a religion and not mysticism, not occultism and not witchcraft. A science which is so practical that if anybody has the mind to challenge it, he can. The practices of hatha yoga are so effective, so scientific, so wonderful, that they can change one's physiological nature. The changes that take place during the practices of hatha yoga in the brain, the cardiovascular system, the body temperature, GSR and EMG have been studied.



Now, about myself, as to on what authority I talk of these things. Let me introduce myself. In India, with the financial assistance of the Central Government of India, I conducted and co-ordinated a very important research on yoga near my town. This research was continued for a period of five years with the assistance of many doctors who were eminent cardiologists. More than one thousand patients suffering from coronary disorders were referred to the yoga section. The subject was 'The effect of yoga postures on coronary diseases'. It is with this authority that I talk to you about yoga. For years I have been a keen

student of the medical science. For years I have studied physics, because I have to first understand yoga myself and then teach others. For the last thirty years, I have been moving around the world, and found that people are convinced about the positive effects of yoga in their lives.

Now this yoga comes to your town. However, we have to understand what yoga is. Many times we think that hatha yoga is the definition of yoga. I don't mean to criticize this. Hatha yoga is a branch of yoga, but yoga is meant to correct, improve and evolve the total man.



You have medical theories and therapeutic science. Yoga is not just a therapeutic science. When you are suffering from a sickness, you take some medicine and you become all right. Or, you have some problem, sciatica or slipped disc, you do acupuncture and you become all right. Or, you go to a healer and you become all right. Healing a disease is one thing and healing the patient is another thing. There is practically no science in the world that treats the patient.

When I say 'treatment of the patient', I mean treatment of the man, the total man. Where does the unhappiness come from and where does the disease come from? Where does this restlessness come from? Does it come from outside or is unhappiness and agony inherent in man's personality? Yoga says that disease, unhappiness, frustration, agony, depression, suffering is inherent in your personality and is not outside. If that be so, then yoga is not a therapeutic science, but a science of the personality.

Now, what do I mean by yoga? A combination of the practices which deal with your body, with your rationale, with your emotions and with your dynamism. That is known as integral yoga. There are various branches of yoga: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga are the main yogas. Then there are other branches of yoga such as kriya yoga, tantra yoga, kundalini yoga, laya yoga, hatha yoga, etc. The purpose of all these yogas is to train, reform and evolve the different aspects of man's personality. Man is not only heart, mind, brain or body. Head, heart and hands – that is man. If you treat man's head and ignore his heart and hands, he will remain sick.

Out of all these yogas, the most important is hatha yoga because it controls the body and the two forms of energy in the body: life and consciousness, life and mind. Your body is composed of two forms of energy, two forms

of shakti. One is known as prana, the life force or the vital force. The other form of energy is known as consciousness, the mind or chitta. These two forms of energies control your motor organs and sensorial organs. They need to be balanced. If there is an imbalance in them, you fall sick or have mental problems. The balance between the two is known as hatha yoga.

In the western countries when you practise asana and pranayama, you call it hatha yoga, but hatha yoga is more than this. *Ha* means life; *tha* means mind. You see, in this cable there are two wires. They are known as positive and negative. When these two cables join together, there is electrical manifestation. The same principle applies in your body. Within your spine there are two nerve channels or nadis. One which flows on the left side carries the flow of consciousness and the other which flows on the right carries the flow of life. These forces are distributed throughout the body from four distributing centres. When there is any block in the distribution of energy, then you become sick either physically or mentally. The yoga postures, pranayama and other exercises in hatha yoga remove these energy blocks.

However, there is another fact which is linked with hatha yoga. The purpose of hatha yoga is not to treat your disease. In the days when hatha yoga was discovered, people were not as sick as they are today. The intention of hatha yoga was to prepare the body and mind for deep meditation and higher awareness. It is very important for everybody to know that just by closing the eyes you do not enter into the higher realm. When you want to meditate, when you want to practise dhyana, and when you want to make your mind quiet, when you want to look within yourself, just closing the eyes is not enough. Every morning, or in the night, thousands of people around the world close their eyes and they try to concentrate their

mind. They try to pray in peace, they want to think with total one-pointedness of mind, but they are not able to do that.

There is no doubt that meditation is the highest achievement of man. Sleep is not the highest achievement of man. Work is not the highest achievement of man. When you are able to get out of this objective experience and are able to experience the inner light, inner mind or inner feeling, that is man's accomplishment. This external mind through which you are operating in your life has its limitations. Those who know how to get rid of this mind and at the same time develop that inner mind, are the people who have created history.

As you travel within yourself, you find that a great flood of energy is within yourself and that you are not the limited man or the sick man. But the point is, how to meditate? When you close the eyes, the mind runs. You can close your eyes, you can plug your ears, you can tighten the body, but you can do nothing with the mind. Even if you try to concentrate very hard, the mind just enters into the subconscious plane and wanders.

For thousands of years, people have been discovering methods, ways and means to meditate. People have discovered wonderful methods, absurd methods, obscene methods, dangerous methods. People have tried to chemically influence the mind. However, except yoga, everything has failed. To hypnotize the mind is easy, to influence the chemistry of the brain is also easy. Take any drug, it happens. But meditation is not shutting the mind. Meditation is not influencing the chemistry of the brain. Meditation is a practice in which you create an evolutionary process in the mind, the brain and consciousness.

Remember, meditation is not shutting the mind. I am repeating again, meditation is not shutting the

mind. Meditation is a process through which you evolve the mind. The mind becomes a better mind. The better mind becomes a higher mind. The higher mind becomes a supermind, and the supermind becomes the Self. This is called evolution. And what is shutting the mind? You close the mind, everything is finished. I am finished, you are finished, everything is finished. There is no light, there is no knowledge.

In order to practise meditation, there has to be a systematic practice of all the forms of yoga. Karma yoga is necessary, otherwise you cannot balance the archetypes of your brain. Without karma yoga, you cannot treat the



schizophrenic mind. This schizophrenic mind manifests in meditation, in dreams. There is only one way in which you can treat this schizophrenic mind. That is karma yoga, selfless work. Then come other practices. So, when you want to practise yoga, please remember that you are practising yoga to change the quality of your mind, the quality of your body and the quality of your manifestation.

There is another important thing. There are many transcendental things, God is one of them. Transcendental migration is also one among them. We talk a lot about God, we talk a lot about transmigration. We talk a lot about karma, we talk a lot about the universal processes and the universal mind. But who has the experience? Yoga brings that experience. Knowledge, you can get from books. Knowledge, you can get from me. You can get knowledge from the professors of philosophy and the professors of yoga. But knowledge is not the ultimate solution of your questions.

If you say there is transmigration, have you experienced it? If you say there is karma and a process of chain reaction, have you seen it? You talk about God, have you even a little taste of him? There is only one way through which you can have direct experience of that. May I again tell you what the difference between knowledge and experience is?

Once I was travelling by plane. The airline was Air-India. On the next seat was an English professor. He had done research on Indian sweets. We were talking about it because I also know a lot about Indian sweets, although I have not eaten a lot. The lunch began. At the end of the lunch, the hostess brought some sweets – rasagulla, which is considered the best of Indian sweets. He took it and said, “Swamiji, what is this sweet?” I said, “You have done the research, why don’t you tell me what it is?” He

said, “Yes, I know, but I have not experienced it. So I am not sure.” This learned man had written pages and pages about rasagulla, but he could not recognize it when it was in his hand. This is the difference between knowledge and experience.

Go to the swamis and you will get knowledge. Read the books by great authorities and you will have knowledge. However, experience cannot be had from any external



*When you want to practise yoga,
please remember that you are
practising yoga to change the
quality of your mind, to change the
quality of your body, and to change
the quality of your manifestation.*

source, except from within. For experience you do not have to depend on evidence from outside. Everybody here, everybody outside, three billion people in the world, everybody has that seed of experience within themselves. Experience need not be imported from people, books and events. You will have to explore it within. That is the purpose of yoga.

I agree that yoga treats diseases. That is what I told you in the beginning. I have been working on yoga therapy, on many diseases. About 89 percent of psychosomatic diseases can be cured through the practices of yoga. It is not my conclusion; it is the conclusion of the medical men, it is the conclusion of scientists. I also know that the practices of yoga improve the mind and the brain, and create a genius. I know that yoga is being taught in many prisons of Australia. I know that yoga is being taught in the Scandinavian countries in mental hospitals. However, that is not the ultimate purpose of yoga; that is a byproduct of yoga. Let us accept the byproduct of yoga, but we should remember that we are human beings, dedicated to the discovery of transcendental matters.

Has it never come to your mind, “Who am I? Where have I come from? What is this brain? What is this intelligence? Why is this man my father and not the other man? Why was I born on 13th of December 1925? Why not earlier, why not later?” Such and many other questions keep coming to our mind from time to time, as we are analytical human beings. For this you read books, you attend many study circles. If you want an answer, the way is yoga. If you want yoga to be integrated in the system of your religion, you can do it. If you want yoga to remain secular, you can maintain it. If you don’t want God to come in between, okay. Yoga can live with an atheist and a theist.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Taming the Mind through Yoga

Rimini, September 1982

Hari Om Tat Sat

Many times it is said that the mind of man is like a monkey. The monkey is very restless by nature. If you give him a bottle of whisky he becomes even more restless, and if a scorpion bites that intoxicated monkey you can imagine how restless he will be! This is exactly the analogy of a very distracted mind. But this is not the analogy of the mind of an aspirant. I think the mind of an aspirant or seeker is not like a monkey. It is like a horse, like a wild horse.

The mind is very beautiful, you know, very beautiful. It is not a sinner or Satan. One needs some sort of technique to tame the mind. If you can tame the mind, you can tame the impossible in life. In fact, all the great yogis, saints and prophets have tamed their minds. The purpose of every form of yoga is ultimately to tame the energies of the mind. This is the theme which I want to develop during this seminar.

You have a mind through which you are functioning, but that mind is only capable of thinking, remembering, feeling, etc. It is through that mind that you are worried, anxious, ambitious and passionate. These manifestations of the mind are lower manifestations. They are the instinctive manifestations. If this mind can be trained properly, then this mind can manifest a much better quality and product.

A great piece of poetry, a wonderful piece of art, a nice piece of architecture are all products of the mind. A violent action, a criminal action is also a manifestation of the mind. Therefore, in yoga the first important thing is to understand how to train the mind. The process of training the mind can be a little different from individual to individual because everybody's mind is not a wild horse.



The mind of a yogi is a horse. He can make his mind dance to the tune of the Absolute. When you are able to train your mind, thousands of people come to see you. Once I heard a story from my guru. There was a king and he had four horses which were totally wild, undisciplined

and untamable. He had declared that he who controls and disciplines the horses will get his daughter in marriage and half his kingdom.

Princes after princes, chiefs after chiefs came to train those horses to marry the princess and get half the kingdom, but they were all killed by the horses. Nobody could marry the princess or get half the kingdom. Years rolled by and one day four persons came in and said they wanted to train the wild horses. The horses were given to them, and three of the horses returned killing the riders. The fourth rider did not return. Months and years passed, but he did not come. It was taken for granted that he was dead.

One day, after many years, that young man came back, riding the same horse. Everybody was amazed at him. For the first time they saw someone riding that horse. They welcomed him and asked him the story. The young man narrated the story this way. He said, "When the horse was let out, he ran with a wild speed. I followed him. Days in and days out, he ran with a wild speed and I followed him. During this period, when the horse rested, I also rested. When he was grazing, I was also eating. But I did not go near the horse. Gradually, in the course of time, I came closer to the horse, and the horse also came closer to me. When I went to the horse, the horse would run away. But when I turned my back, he would follow me. Then I took a bunch of grass and went to the horse; he ran away. But when I was resting with the bunch of grass beside me, the horse came and grazed on that.

"In the course of time, the horse developed a great attraction for me. When I would go to sleep, the horse would keep awake protecting me. When I moved, the horse would also move, as if following me. For many years we walked like this in the wild forests. Gradually the horse would sit very close to me. Once I touched his body, the



horse shivered and ran away from me. But later, when I was sleeping, he would sniff me. Gradually I was able to touch him and ride on him.”

This is the story he narrated about how he and the horse came close to each other. When he was able to train the horse, he was able to ride the horse and travel through every terrain. When he returned with the horse he greeted the people and said, “Here is the tamed horse. He understands me. I watched him. He is no more a wild horse.” This is just a story, but it happens to most of us.

When we try and control the mind by fierce methods, then we fail and get hurt. When you meditate or practise your mantra, or do some introspection, many thoughts come to your mind. What do you do with them? As far as I know, you try to suppress them. You do not allow them to express themselves. Suppose you are trying to meditate. Meditation does not happen to you spontaneously. The moment you close your eyes, you don’t meditate, you cannot meditate. Instead, many stray thoughts wander through your mind, and when those thoughts come to your mind, you immediately reject them. This is not good, and that is why we get hurt.

I know that many religious people end up in mental hospitals because they were told not to think this but think that. And you know, only those thoughts come to the mind which we are told not to think. If you suppress them, they will come in your dreams. If they don’t come in your dreams, they come in your behaviour. That is why most people are not able to train the mind and utilize it properly. I have come across many hundreds of people who have been trying to meditate for the last forty-five years, but even now they are fighting with the mind.

The first hypothesis, that you must control every impulse of the mind, is not scientific. It is good for your

family and society, but it is not good for your spiritual growth because the mind needs expression. The mind is so powerful that you cannot control it by force. All the great miracles that you read about are brought about by the mind. The great men who have descended into this world are products of the mind. Those who have conquered the lands and seas are products of the mind. Swamis, saints and prophets are products of the mind.

Now, what are you doing when you are trying to control the mind? You are trying to ride a wild horse, and you will be killed. In yoga there is a systematic course of training, taming and utilizing the mind. People use various methods to subdue the mind. Some use hypnotic methods. Some use religious methods. Some use hypnotic drugs. The purpose of all these is to stupefy the mind. That is precisely the reason why the people practising yoga have always remained behind the scenes. They do all the practices, but they do not accept the powers of the mind.

Imagine that you have a child who is brilliant, very intelligent, a genius, maybe a child prodigy, but he is very mischievous. He kicks the telephone, bangs the almirahs, destroys the doors and windows and sets fire to the carpet. What will you do? Every time he makes a mischief you give him a slap and shout at him, "If you do it, I will beat you." He cries and stops for a while. Then he makes mischief again and you beat him harder. You throw him out of doors and don't give him food to eat. You know what he does? He goes out with the street boys and makes mischief. He has gone out of your hands.

We are doing the same thing with our baby minds. Your mind does not need cruelty. Your mind does not need repentance. Your mind does not need punishment. It needs infinite tolerance, infinite patience. If you are a good parent you will have to bear with the child who you

know is special. Even children who are retarded or under-grown are so because they have been mishandled.

So, we come to yoga. To suppress the expressions and energies of the mind is not the purpose of yoga. It is true that at one point, or at one level, you have to concentrate the mind on one point only. In the state of meditation, when you are visualizing Om or the candle flame, nothing but the candle flame or Om must appear to you. No thinking of I, he, you. Just that form Om and nothing else. However, that is the ultimate objective of the practice of yoga and this ultimate objective should not be achieved by force. Therefore, we always say, "When you are practising your mantra, do not at all worry about what is happening with the mind. When you are practising your mantra and your mind is distracted, let it be distracted. You must at the same time try to see what your mind is manifesting."

There are different types of people. Some people think in a very distracted way and some think in a consistent way. Those who think in a distracted way do not think of one idea for a long time. Suppose you have the desire to own a car. You think about it for some time and then your mind slips and you start thinking of something else. You think different ideas, one after the other, without being consistent with any one of them. This is one type of mind. There is another type of mind which is more evolved. It will enter into fantasies. It will build castles in the air and think great things. These thoughts come to such a mind almost continuously. This is a different type of mind.

These are the two types of mind which you will have to deal with in your yoga practices. In order to deal with them, you will have to utilize two different types of practices. We call these two types of mind distracted mind and oscillating mind. What is an oscillating mind? It is like a pendulum. It goes and come back. It has a centre, but it

will wander away. It will go away and come back to that centre automatically. This is a higher mind, a better mind. The other mind is a distracted mind. It has no centre; it has no nucleus. It goes on jumping from object to object and from thought to thought, and finally it does not know where it stands.

In order to give a nucleus to the distracted mind, a seeker must have a mantra, a yantra or a mandala. He should have all three or only one of them. Mantra means a sound, yantras are geometrical patterns and mandala is an idol pattern or a picture pattern. These three things, mantra, yantra and mandala or any of the three act as a centre for the distracted mind. They help the mind to focus itself at a point.

It is like having a home. You may go to a shop, race course, cinema or a friend's house, but you know where to come back. If you don't have a home, where will you go after the cinema? You will stay on the footpath. A person who has no nucleus in the mind is called a distracted man, but he who has a centre for the mind is called an oscillating man. In yoga we are trying to develop the quality of the oscillating mind.

We do not mind the wanderings of your mind, but we feel that your mind must have a hitching pin. If the mind has a hitching pin, it will automatically come back to that, sooner or later. As I mentioned, in yoga and tantric practices we have three types of abode for the mind: mantra, yantra and mandala. If you have any one of these, it does not mean that you have been able to tame that wild horse. Taming the energy is not a joke and taming the mind is also not a joke. You have to be very careful and you should not at all misbehave with your mind. You should not insult your manifestations. You should not feel guilty of any mental attitude. And you must practise mantra, yantra and mandala alongside antar mouna.

The practice of antar mouna is something I want to tell you about during this seminar, although you will be taught other things as well. Antar mouna is the same attitude which that prince had towards the wild horse. The objective is to tame the horse, the mind, but the technique is something else. You will have to deal with your mind according to its idiosyncrasies.

If you are practising your meditation or mantra and your mind is thinking all kinds of things, what will you do? Most people will try to withdraw their mind from that. But I don't want you to withdraw. I want you to allow your mind to do what it wants, but you must observe the mind very carefully. Do not try to ignore the sounds which disturb your mind. Instead, identify with the sounds. Do not withdraw your mind from the persons who disturb your mind. Instead, identify with them. In the same way, do not withdraw your mind from any unholy thought. Instead, identify with that. Observe the whole function of the mind. What am I thinking? What am I seeing? Am I feeling fear? Am I feeling remorse? Am I feeling loneliness? Am I feeling passion? Am I feeling anger?

You must know all these manifestations of the mind which come to you every day. You will be surprised to realize after some time that you do not know your mind. You will be surprised to realize how ignorant you were to the mind. The mind exists on three levels: conscious, subconscious and unconscious. It is like an iceberg, a little bit is seen and the rest is underneath. No man has seen the homogeneity of the mind. What you know about your mind is only a part. However, before you go in to tame the mind, you must know the mind. That is why antar mouna is practised.

In India, the practice of antar mouna was integrated with every practice. Hindus are very religious people, just like Christians. They are taught not to think about bad things. The children are told, "Don't think bad things." In spite of the religious background of the Hindus, the practice of antar mouna was integrated in their spiritual discipline. When you practise your prayers, mantra or yoga, you should always see the mind. At the beginning, it is very difficult because you get disturbed by little things, particularly people in the West. In India, when we are

practising our mantra, a lot of noise is going on around us, someone is playing a gramophone record, another is playing the radio and we don't care. But here, if somebody even uses the flush, you will report it to the police. This is not the right attitude to maintain with your mind.

Sit down quietly. Allow your mind to experience sounds, whichever sounds you can hear. Do not be disturbed by the outer sounds, but try to imbibe them, try to hear them. This will also improve the capacity of your sense of hearing. Then, whichever thoughts come to your mind, try to visualize them as though you were looking at a television screen. I know what I am telling you is something very different from what you have been hearing for many centuries. I also know that what I am saying is very hard for you to assimilate because we have that line of demarcation, "This is bad, you should not think it." We have always been travelling between good and bad, and not been able to transcend either of the two.

Once you let your mind free, the expressions are unlimited, and then the mind becomes effulgent. The mind becomes awareness, and then the mantra becomes dynamic, the yantra becomes powerful and the mandala becomes real. You can project your thought force, you can transmit your thought waves. The mind can produce waves which can travel thousands of miles instantaneously. With this mind we can also enter into samadhi or the spiritual state. With this mind we can love our children, husband, wife and neighbours. With an untrained mind, you cannot love your neighbours. This undisciplined mind cannot have compassion for other human beings. We talk about love and compassion; it is all intellectual, not real. It is all false talk. It is only a disciplined mind that has compassion and love.

Hari Om Tat Sat



Bhakti Yoga

Rimini, September 1982

Hari Om Tat Sat

Your yoga practices will bring you inner experience only if there is bhakti for guru and for God. There are two symbols of devotion, God and guru. God, we have not seen, and we do not know how to love him. Of course we pray, but that is not the total bhakti. Guru, we have seen. And we have also developed some kind of relationship with him. Therefore, one must have devotion for guru and for God at the same time.

Now, let me deal with bhakti. Bhakti does not merely mean devotion. It means total surrender. Bhakti yoga is one of the powerful systems of yoga. As we have raja yoga sutras, we also have bhakti yoga sutras. There are two important texts on bhakti yoga. One is *Bhakti Sutras* of Narada and the other is *Bhakti Sutras* of Shandilya. Narada and Shandilya were two gurus. They have written concise books on bhakti. In addition, from time to time, many great men have descended to demonstrate how to practise bhakti. At this moment, I am thinking of a great lady who was a bhakta. She had immersed her total mind in God. She was the daughter of a very powerful king in India during the fifteenth century.

When she was six years old, a swami came to her family and presented the little child with an idol of Lord Krishna. Krishna is one of the most important figures in India. In every family, his glories are sung. So, a statue of Krishna was presented to her and she kept that statue with her in total love. She began to feel that Krishna was her husband and refused to get married. However, she came from the family of a powerful king so she had to get married. There was no choice.

She was given in marriage to a powerful prince, but she refused to recognize him as her husband. She said, "My husband is Krishna and nobody else." That small idol became a living reality for her and although they tried to convert her, they could not. She broke the rules and systems of the royal family. She used to compose her own songs and sing them in satsang and kirtan, and go into ecstasy. For her family, this was totally objectionable so much so that they wanted to kill her. Her husband sent her a cup of deadly poison. God only knows what happened, but she did not die. In her song she wrote, "My husband sent me a cup of poison. I drank that and laughed at it." Her mother-in-law packed a cobra in a gift box and sent it to her. When she opened it, it became the idol of Lord Vishnu. It was not her miracle; it was the miracle of her bhakti.

One day her husband was told that she was talking in her room to somebody. He went to her door and overheard the conversation. She was saying, "My darling, whenever you come, I am waiting for you." In rage, her husband broke down the door with a sword in his hand and found that she was all alone. In anger he asked, "To whom were you talking?" She said, "To my beloved, to my lover, my husband." He asked, "Who is that?" She replied, "Krishna." He said, "Krishna is in the temple." She replied, "No, those who love him find him in front of them."

It became very difficult for her to exist in the palace. It was a very powerful royal family and it was a question of their family prestige. She could not go to kirtan whenever she wanted, she could not dance in ecstasy whenever she felt like it, she could not close herself away and talk to her husband all the time and she never had any privacy with her husband. She had to put on an elegant dress when the royal guests came; she could not dress casually. So she left the place. That place is called

Chittor; it is near Udaipur in western India, and has one of the most beautiful fortresses with wonderful victory towers, all made in marble.

She walked the whole distance and finally came to Vrindavan which is in northern India, very close to Delhi. That is the place where many centuries ago Krishna is said to have lived and played with the cowherd boys, making childish mischief. The place is considered very holy by Hindus. Even today millions of Hindus go to Vrindavan just to touch the dust of that land and apply it to their forehead because Krishna walked on that land.

Perhaps you do not know much about Krishna. There is a beautiful book on bhakti yoga called *Srimad Bhagavatam*. It is the life-story of Krishna. With Krishna comes the name of Radha. When Krishna was a young boy, he loved a girl slightly older than him. He was not even ten, maybe eight or nine. The name of that girl was Radha. She came to the Yamuna one morning to fetch water for her domestic purposes. Krishna was swimming in the river at that time. He saw her and she saw him and both began to love each other. He confessed his love before Radha and she also accepted it. That was the first and the last meeting they had, and up to this day, the names of Radha and Krishna are always spoken together. That was the Krishna whom Mira loved.

She arrived in Vrindavan in search of a guru. At that time, a great guru lived there. She went to meet him, but at first his disciples refused to admit her because the guru never met any woman. She sent a message, "I understand that there is only one Purusha (Self or the masculine principle), everything else is Prakriti (Nature or the feminine principle). Who is this guru who calls himself a Purusha? Are there two Purushas?" When this message was taken to the guru, he was overwhelmed. He initiated the lady into mantra and she lived there for the rest of her life.

At that time, India was ruled by Akbar the Great, the grandfather of Shah Jehan who built the Taj Mahal. Akbar was a great devotee of God. He was a Muslim, but he respected every religion. He used to go to all the swamis and gurus. When he heard that a great lady was living in Vrindavan who could sing the name of God and enter into samadhi or trance, he wanted to see her.

In India there is a tradition. Whether you are a ruler or a very wealthy person, if you have to meet a guru, you go to him; you don't call him to you. And when you go to meet a guru or saint, you are a common person there. You have to sit on the floor before the guru no matter who you are. Even if you are the commanding chief of the army, when you come in, you have to take off your shoes.

So, Akbar went to see her. He attended the kirtan and was completely overwhelmed. When she would sing God's name in kirtan and bhajan, she would forget herself completely. When the mind is impure and tainted by passions, when your mind is full of petty and insignificant worries, when even the smallest event of life becomes great to you, when you are not able to concentrate your mind, when your faith faces crises again and again, at that time if you sing the name repeatedly, ten to thirty times or more, then you enter into a state called bhava samadhi. It is a little different from raja yoga samadhi.

In raja yoga samadhi there is external and internal immobility. In bhava samadhi the inner self is quiet, but externally your emotions are charged with a high-power energy. It is as if you are pining for your darling, as if you are suffering from the pangs of separation. The relationship between the individual soul and the universal soul is the same relationship which exists between husband and wife. That is also the concept in Christianity. "I am the wife, God is the husband, and I want to be one

with him. I suffer from separation and we are trying to unite with each other." However, as long as you have your individuality, you cannot merge in him. In order to shake off the individuality, you will have to remove the cloaks caused by ignorance. When you feel that you are a man or a woman, you are an intellectual, engineer, doctor, or a Muslim, Hindu or Christian, that is all right everywhere else. However, when you stand before God, these are complexes.

How can you go to your wife or husband and say I am this or that. Unless both of them forget what they are, they cannot become one. That is exactly what happens in bhakti yoga. A devotee represents the individual consciousness, God represents spiritual consciousness, and the ultimate purpose of the devotee is to merge in God. Even as all the rivers are flowing only to unite and merge in the sea, all the people, all devotees, must try to move towards God and merge in him. Mirabai was a reflection of such devotion.

In bhakti yoga, you will have to develop some sort of a relationship with God and guru. These relationships are not mundane, physical and gross relationships. They are based on mundane relationships, but they are much bigger than that. If you want to love God, you will have to find out how you can love him. It is not possible for everybody to consider God as husband. Then there would be a problem in the family. Who is this other man who has come? But there are other relationships which are equally strong, for instance the mother and son relationship. It is stronger than the husband-wife relationship. You can be the mother and he can be the son. Or, he can be the master and you can be the servant.

Please remember one point. We are all created by Nature. We are predominantly the creations of Nature, we belong to the realm of Prakriti. Therefore, our sex

may be masculine, but in essence we are feminine. In this sense, I am Prakriti and you are also Prakriti. The women are Prakriti and so are the men. It means that God is always male. In this way, you can project your fraternal, maternal and matrimonial emotions to him.

The mental distractions are created by emotions. All the problems you are confronting on the path of yoga are the creations of emotions. If you can channelize those emotions towards God, you are free. That is bhakti yoga. However, everybody cannot practise it. Those who can, do not need any other type of yoga at all. Therefore, bhakti can be divided into two categories. One is the bhakti where there is total submission of your emotions to God. In this type of bhakti, you do not exist at all any more. But, as I said, it is not possible for everybody to practise this. Only by the grace of God, by the good karmas of your previous lives and the good training of your parents can this bhakti develop.

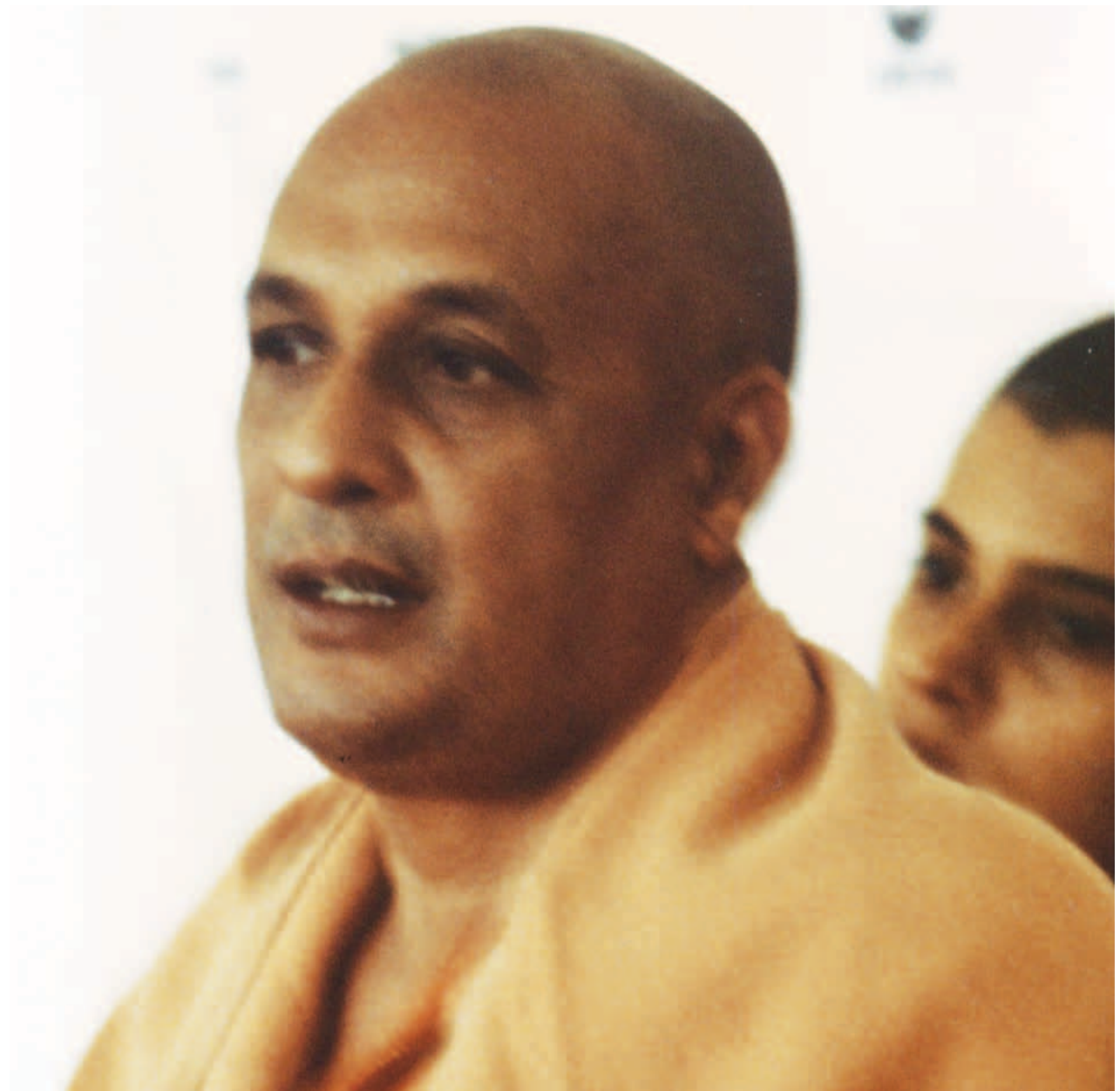
I was talking about Krishna. He lived in Vrindavan. Later, he had to leave Vrindavan because a king had attacked that place many times. It became very difficult for him to stay there because many people were jealous of him. He was very beautiful, very powerful and a wonderful man with supernatural powers. So he left North India and migrated to the westernmost part of India. There he established his own kingdom with his kith and kin.

Krishna became a king from a cowherd boy, and he was also a great teacher of yoga. By that time the little kids in Vrindavan with whom he used to play had also grown up. Krishna sent one of his disciples to Vrindavan to teach them yoga. When they found that someone had come from Krishna, they went rushing to ask how Krishna was. They asked, "Now Krishna must be an emperor. He must have ministers, commanders and armies, and he must have forgotten us. Does he remember that in

childhood we used to play on the banks of the Yamuna? Does he remember when we were children we used to steal butter and milk from other houses? Does he remember that when we were children we used to beat each other?" His disciple said, "Yes, he remembers all of you." They said, "We remember him not only once a day, not only twice a day, not only once a week, but with every breath. We not only remember him when we have some desires to be fulfilled. We not only remember him when we are pure in body and mind. From dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn, we remember him and his beautiful games."

Then they asked the disciple why he had come. He replied, "Krishna sent me here to teach you yoga." They asked, "What is yoga?" The disciple replied, "Close your eyes and concentrate on bhrumadhya in ajna chakra." They said, "Oh, we don't know all this." The disciple said, "But I will teach you. I will teach you how to concentrate." They said a marvellous thing. The name of the disciple was Uddhava. They said, "Uddhava, we have one mind, one heart, one consciousness, and with that we have always been thinking about Krishna. Now you are asking us to concentrate here and there. By which mind will we do it? We don't have two minds. We don't have three minds. We don't have twenty minds. We have one consciousness and that has been completely engrossed in the memory of Krishna. We do not see him and maybe we will never see him. We know he is very busy, but we are suffering from the pangs of separation. We remember how we played with him, we remember how he would take away our clothes when we were bathing in the pond. We remember every one of his pranks, fun and frolic." That is called Krishna lila.

Lila means play or divine enactment. For example, I am a swami but I go to the stage and act the part of





*When the unmanifest and formless
God comes down to the level of man
due to His grace, that is called a
divine incarnation or avatara.*

a beggar. That is called lila. I am not a beggar, I am a swami. So, this was called Krishna lila because he is divine. He is beyond all attachments. He is the creator of billions of universes. Why should he love these little children? That is his lila. That is called Krishna lila. So they said, “We remember his lila all the time” because a bhakta or devotee believes that God is infinite. He is beyond name, form and mind. With this mind you can never reach God. Then, what to do? He is so far, so far. However, for the sake of his devotees, He comes down a little. Do you understand?

What does a mother do with her child? Does the child behave like his mother? No, he cannot. She has to behave like a child. Your lover has to come down, because if he doesn’t, you cannot reach him. If the mother behaves like a woman of thirty-five, the child will remain at a distance and there will be no link. The devotee cannot break his limitations. So, how to reach him? You are weak, you are infirm, you are ignorant. What can you do? Therefore, God has to come down to your level. When the unmanifest and formless God comes down to the level of man due to His grace, that is called a divine incarnation or avatara. Krishna descended to the level of those children. Why should that unmanifest reality, God, play with those little children? Why should He collect a few boys and girls and break into someone’s house and steal curd, butter and milk? It is because God has to act according to the level of the devotee. That is called lila.

They told Uddhava, “Please go back. We cannot practise yoga. We don’t have to practise yoga because our minds are already united with him. Yoga means union and our minds are in him, our minds are already united with him. Why do you want to teach us yoga? You teach yoga to the people who don’t love God. There are many people who don’t love God.”

You may read the *Bhagavad Gita* or go to a sanctum sanctorum. You may go to a chapel or temple, but that is a different matter. You may pray to God for a better job, you may pray to be able to marry the girl of your choice, to heal somebody in your family who is sick. That is a lower form of devotion. To remember God in distress, to pray to God for a selfish motive, to pray to God to see Him, is lower devotion. That is not transcendental devotion. We give our heart to God not for anything else, but only because we want to love Him. What His attitude is towards me, I don’t care.

Two centuries ago, there appeared a man in India who was born in the present Bangladesh. He was a great scholar of economics and he was also married. Suddenly, he developed devotion and he renounced everything. All the time he would sing *Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare; Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare*. His kirtan was very infectious. Thousands would follow him when he passed through a village. The Hare Krishna movement belongs to that sect. He used to tell everybody only one thing, “In this kaliyuga, the only way is to sing His name all the time.”

I have spoken to you a little bit about bhakti yoga. I like it, but I still have to discover what love is. I do have some glimpses of it, but I think basically I belong to the tradition of yoga because I believe that when you love God, you must forget everything else. But that does not happen. We love God side by side with Satan, and one cannot have both. Therefore, those who find it difficult to practise bhakti yoga – and there are millions in the world – the path of yoga is for them. But once you discover this path, you have achieved that goal also.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Satsang

Rimini, September 1982

Q. Please speak to us about the origins of yoga, how it was taught to Lord Shiva and how it reached us human beings.

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is a very old practice. We can find references to yoga in the oldest of books. Even in those civilizations which preceded the Atlantis, there are references to yoga. We always consider Shiva to be the original master of yoga. It is very difficult to say whether Shiva was an actual person or a force, but definitely legends are filled with stories of Shiva. Shiva taught yoga to Parvati who was his consort. Parvati was both a disciple and wife, and Shiva instructed her in both yoga and tantra. This is the legendary background of the origin of yoga. However, we have made some studies about the historical origin.

As far as South America and the Far East, the science of yoga was known many thousand years ago. Yoga came to us through the tradition of gurus. From time to time, we have tried to revive it in every part of the world. Even in Europe, before the advent of Christianity, the Celtic civilization was more or less practising yoga. Even in early Christianity they used to encourage, inspire, preach and practise yoga. It was only later, as it happens to every religion, that it became a ceremonial religion.

In the last two hundred years, the industrial revolution put everything into a reverse gear. However, in the last thirty or forty years, things have begun to brighten up. All over the world there is a revival of yogic philosophy. Even in a country like Russia, where everything is controlled, you can find that people are very aware of yoga. In every

country, no matter what the religion, yoga is developing very fast. The backbone of yoga is the guru-disciple relationship; therefore, the gurus today are trying to disseminate yoga to the farthest corners of the world.

Q. Can you tell us something about Ganga Darshan?

Paramahamsaji: Ganga Darshan is the name of my ashram in India, where I live. This place is situated on a small hillock. About 5,200 years ago, this was the seat of a great tantric yogi who was also a king. He ruled from that palace for twenty-three years. It is there that I live and I call it Ganga Darshan.

I first came to Munger in 1956 and often spent my time on this hillock. A lot of unusual experiences came to me there. Sometimes they were very frightening. At times I thought I would go insane and even left the town out of fear. The moment I left the town, I was all right. Later I acquired this property because I thought the ashram should be built in such a place which has a powerful environment, so that people who come there can experience peace and spiritual light. Why have I named it Ganga Darshan? *Darshan* means vision. Ganga refers to the river Ganga. You get a panoramic view of the Ganga from the ashram. But Ganga also means the pingala nadi.

In hatha yoga, we read about the two nadis, ida and pingala. Pingala nadi is called Ganga, which is the symbol of prana or life. In the practices of pranayama and yoga, the yogi controls the pingala nadi. When the flow of pingala nadi is controlled, he enters into the inner experience. Ganga Darshan is one of the most important places in the history of yoga in the East and the West. It is going to be a very big institution, able to house a thousand people at a time where people can live as long as they want to, work and do their own sadhana. People



come there for treatment of their diseases and also to live there.

Many people have come from Italy to live there. Now Swami Ananda is going to come to live there for some time. People from Italy have contributed substantially for the fulfilment of Ganga Darshan. Of course, Italians are not very rich people, but they have a very rich heart. In the fulfilment of Ganga Darshan, many nations have offered their hands. Many countries have come forward

to fulfil this project. We are going to establish a yoga research centre there to assess the effects of yoga on the body and mind. Many scientists and doctors are undergoing training in various parts of the world right now to handle this project in Ganga Darshan. We are planning to expose every yoga practice to this experiment so that you can know what happens during the various practices of yoga.

Q. What relation does the *Bhagavad Gita* have with the yoga of today?

Paramahansa ji: More than five thousand years ago, there was a great civil war between two dynasties in India. This battle was fought in a place which lies to the north-west of Delhi. Countries outside India also participated. That time India included modern Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tibet, Burma, Malaysia, Iran and Turkey. That was known as greater India.

When the two armies were about to battle with each other, something happened there. The chief of one of the armies was Arjuna and his chariot was driven by an outstanding personality of that age, Krishna. Krishna is held in the same esteem by Hindus as Christ by Christians. The only difference is that Christians consider Christ to be the son of God and Hindus consider Krishna to be an incarnation. Another difference is that Christ lived the life of a sadhu and Krishna lived the life of an emperor. However, from his very childhood, he was the master of miracles like Christ.

During the famous battle, Krishna was placed in a very difficult situation. The chief commanders of both sides came to seek his patronage. It was not possible for him to patronize both, so he said, "Here is my army and here I am. You choose one of the two." One party chose his army and Arjuna chose Lord Krishna himself.

Krishna told Arjuna that although he would join him, he would not handle any weapon. So he became Arjuna's charioteer.

When the battle was about to begin, Arjuna became nervous. He saw his own uncles, brothers, teachers, relatives and friends before him among those he would have to kill. He decided to withdraw from the war. Then Krishna came and instructed Arjuna, and these instructions are known as the *Bhagavad Gita*. The instructions are divided into eighteen chapters and the title of each chapter refers to one kind of yoga.

The title of the first chapter is 'The Yoga of Mental Depression'. The title of the second chapter is 'Samkhya Yoga'. The third chapter is 'Bhakti Yoga'. The sixth chapter is 'Raja Yoga'. The eighteenth chapter is 'Sannyasa Yoga'. In this way, each chapter has the title of a different yoga. One theme is running through the eighteen chapters, which is "renounce the ego and live in the world". If you can renounce your ego, you can live in the world like the lotus in water. In fact, the instructions in the *Bhagavad Gita* are considered to be the basis of karma yoga.

Karma yoga means that you can give a great meaning and purpose to any action you perform. Why do you marry? Because you want to have children. Why do you have a business? You want to earn money. These are the aims everybody has regarding his life and profession. This is called karma, but karma yoga is different. When you realize or decide a sublime aim for your life, it is karma yoga. You must realize the purpose of your existence, and then whatever you do becomes karma yoga. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, life as a whole is accepted within the plan of spiritual progress. This means that whatever you do is part of your spiritual progress and nothing in your life is extra-spiritual. This you have to realize.

Q. How to live a sexually active married life and practise tantra?

Paramahansa ji: In tantric practices, you can live the life of a celibate and you can live the family life. The sexual act releases a certain amount of high frequency energy, and this energy is usually wasted. There are certain practices in tantra through which this energy is channelized to the higher centres of the brain and consciousness.

In this short time it is not possible for me to deal with this topic, but I can give you an example. If I prick you with a pin, where do you feel the pain? You will feel the pain where I prick you. But where did the pain really happen? Which is the seat of experience? That place where I pricked you is not the seat of experience. The seat of experience is the brain. But why cannot you experience it there? Why do you experience it in the body? Because your mind is gross. Therefore, you do not experience the pain at the centre. However, the pain can be experienced directly in the higher centres.

The sexual experience is also a type of experience. Where do you experience it? At the gross level. That is why it leaves you exhausted and guilty. That is why it leaves you barren and empty. And that is why it does not contribute to your spiritual awareness. If you can experience the sexual experience at the higher centre, then it will immediately turn into an illuminating experience. But you cannot do it.

Human beings have the experience at the gross level. Animals have the experience, but they don't know where. Lower creatures probably don't even know what they are doing. Yogis, however, must experience it in the higher centres and for that, you will have to practise fundamental yoga and then the other forms of yoga.

The sexual act has threefold objectives according to one's level of evolution. One type of people practise it for progeny, that is all. The second, slightly higher

people, practise it for pleasure. Still higher type of people practise it for samadhi. And still higher type of people don't practise it at all, because you don't have to have a partner for the experience. Both are inside of you, the positive and the negative, the ida and the pingala, the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. You join both of them in ajna chakra. That is called maithuna is Sanskrit. *Maithuna* does not mean sexual intercourse; it means union of two. Two men can meet, two women can meet, two wires can also meet, two ideas can also meet. That is called maithuna, which is unfortunately equated with sexual intercourse.

So, at one level it is progeny, at a higher level it is pleasure, still higher it is samadhi, and when you go to the highest, the union between ida and pingala takes place in ajna chakra. Two flows of energy unite with each other and bliss springs up. That bliss is a hundred times more than the bliss acquired in sexual union. That is why many yogis can manage to live alone.

To practise tantra, you have to study a lot. I do not challenge your use, but I think nowadays the modern East and West are trying to use tantra to perfect their anarchical sexual behaviours. It is not good. We are yoga-minded people and we understand the role of the sexual act in human life, but you cannot say that you can attain samadhi by sex. You have to understand it much better and go deeper into it.

Q. In meditation is it necessary to have a personal mantra?

Paramahansa ji: In order to succeed in meditation, you must have a nucleus or a base. A mantra is most helpful and powerful. You can also use, or you can exclusively use, a form or a mandala. But a mantra has a few other aspects.

Mantra is a sound, and this sound explodes within the mind and then the whole consciousness is pervaded by the sound. You must remember that sound is a form of energy. There are many other forms of energy: electrical energy is one form, nuclear energy is another. In the same way, sound is also potential energy and it can attain any frequency. At a lower frequency, you can hear the sound. I am audible to you because the sound which I am producing has a low frequency.

In mantra yoga, there are various techniques to increase the frequency of sound. Even in the science of physics we know that sound can create holes through solid metal. We also know that sound can travel and re-travel many times every second. That is the science of the radar. However, everything depends on the frequency of the sound. A bat is able to produce high frequency flapping sounds. My sound must also be travelling back and forth many thousand times in one second. These are the subtle aspects of sound.

Sound in yoga is called nada. Nada is the sound which is perceptible at different stages. This sound which I am introducing is perceptible within a limited range. You can hear it because your ears are organized and tuned for that frequency. However, if there is a mosquito or a fly in this room, it will not be able to hear my sound because its ears are tuned to a different frequency.

Sound has micro waves and macro waves. Therefore, in japa yoga, you have four stages for improving the frequency of sound in the mind. Suppose your mantra is *Om*. Now, let us not say that this is a mantra, let us say that this is nada, sound. Mantra and nada are the same substance. When sound is used to improve the quality of mind, it becomes a mantra. *Om* is a nada, a sound. When you are practising *Om* in order to improve your meditation and mind, then it becomes a mantra.

Nada is a Sanskrit word which means to flow constantly, and also that which resonates. Something which flows and resonates is nada. That is the literal meaning. The literal meaning of mantra is, "By reflection upon which the mind becomes free from matter." Therefore, we should not translate mantra as a divine name or holy name, not even God's name. Mantra is a secular sound and not a religious sound.

In tantra, the science of mantra has been described in great detail. They say a mantra is a combination of sound, colour and frequency. Each and every mantra has an effect on the mind based on these. When you practise the mantra aloud, first you generate a low frequency. When you stop chanting it aloud and begin to whisper it, you are raising the frequency. Then you stop producing the whispering sound and practise the mantra in your mind, not producing the sound but feeling the vibration of the mantra within. You are increasing the frequency of the sound further. You are not able to hear the sound, but you can feel the sound. Then you practise the mantra in the chakras, in different parts of the body, and this raises the frequency even further.

Now, remember that mantra is nada. Nada is a point, which is known as bindu. *Bindu* means a point and it is the smallest measurement. It is like a seed. You take a small seed and put it in earth. After some time, you will find a mango tree, an avocado tree, an almond tree or a peach tree from that little seed. In each and every seed, whether it is a material one or a non-material one, there are archetypes. These archetypes develop in the form of a tree. In the same way, the nada, when it is meditated upon or practised, assumes enormous proportions. Therefore, instead of meditating directly, it is always advisable to improve and explode the nada with the practice of mantra.

Q. Does one have to think during relaxation?

Paramahamsaji: You can do whatever you like. During relaxation, you should let the body and mind be spontaneous. It is not as if you are relaxed because you are lying down flat. During relaxation you can have any position of the body, but that has to be spontaneous. Thoughts can come and go.

Q. What is the role of humanity and where is it going?

Paramahamsaji: You should ask this question to a prophet. I am not a prophet. You should ask this question to a pessimistic person. I am not pessimistic. I have good hopes about humanity. I don't feel a coming disaster. I don't think that a major chunk of humanity will be eliminated. I see that man will grow better and better.

The past history of man hasn't been a good history. It is true that good people did come, but more or less, humanity was suffering. Now we are free. We are free to lead a spiritual life. Never in the history of mankind did a renaissance take place as today. Not only old or grown-up people, even young children are now following the spiritual path. If we devote ourselves to spiritual discoveries in this age, we will have a much better society in due time.

Earlier, we had no technological conveniences. Now we can cook our food very quickly. We can reach any place in a few hours and we can have much more time to practise yoga now. Earlier, man had to strive hard. It was four miles an hour on foot, now it is six hundred miles an hour by plane. Therefore, with the technological comforts afforded to us, we should make use of the spare time. We should not waste time, mind and money in ways which do not help us spiritually.

I see the sun rising. I see silver linings on the horizon. Of course, I feel this as an optimistic person. I am aware

of the Doomsday prophecies. I have read those manuals and I do not agree. That will not happen.

Q. To be always aware of the immortal sphere, which attitude do I have to have towards myself and what do I have to do to put this into practice?

Paramahamsaji: Practise everything step by step and not all at one time. First comes guru, then mantra, then the sadhana which the guru teaches, then a proper attitude to your lifestyle. Then things will develop on their own.

Q. Is rebirthing dangerous or good?

Paramahamsaji: During the process of rebirthing, the consciousness regresses. When that happens, you can have many glimpses of your childhood. You can have the experience of the light when you were an embryo. Ultimately however, it does not create a good change in your mind and life. It is very good to be able to remember your past life, the past in this life. That helps you in introspection, but you don't need to resort to methods such as rebirthing because when you attain a high state in meditation, the incidents of your past life become clear to you automatically.

I am not against the process of rebirthing, but I consider it unnecessary. Even if you do not undergo the process of rebirthing, at the higher state in dhyana, meditation, things will come to you automatically.

Q. Briefly, what do you think of these words from the Genesis, "Then God made man with dust of the ground and blew breath in the both nostrils and this was the breath of life and the man became a living being."

Paramahamsaji: This is a symbolic expression of the process of materialization of matter and life together. The quotation which you have referred to is not from a book

of biology, botany or physics, but from a religious book. If it had been a book on natural sciences, then something else would have been written in order to elaborate this statement. The dust here does not mean just physical dust; it is symbolic of matter, and 'blowing life' means the emergence of life force in matter.

Matter has many stages of existence, manifestation and annihilation. At one level matter is inert. In the process of evolution it manifests life. Later, it manifests consciousness. Even later, it manifests energy. The final manifestation of matter is knowledge and experience. This is the truth about physics and metaphysics both. The great people taught the truth in a very simple way and briefly. That is why this statement is brief and symbolical.

Q. Swamiji, is it true that your spirit comes to each one of us?

Paramahamsaji: There are two ways of teaching. One is called tuition and the other is transmission. In tuition you have to teach the disciple through word of mouth. In transmission it is not even necessary that guru and disciple see each other. One of my ways is to infuse knowledge through transmission.

Those who keep themselves in tune with me can always have the advantage of transmission. It is not imagination. I can always get into the soul of people. And everybody can feel me, not only in the morning but at any time of the day. I do give many classes and teach people because they want it, and I have been doing it for over three decades. But gradually, I am teaching less and less, and it is not even necessary for me to teach. When the soul blooms, everybody can feel it.

What is wanted is a serene and childlike consciousness. Intellectuals have a very thick insulation system. It is good to be intellectual and analytical, but so far as your spiritual

master is concerned, you should not be an intellectual because there are many events in spiritual life which do not conform to your intellectual answers.

One who has the feelings of a child does not have the head of an intellectual. It is good to see what, where, how and why in so far as the worldly things are concerned. But when you want to experience something which is beyond the mind and the senses, this questioning will not do; rather, it will destroy. The experience which you are seeking is not far off from you. It is closer than your own breath. It is closer than your own thought. It is closer than your own self. There is a very thin veil between you and that experience. To achieve that experience, you do not have to walk a thousand miles. To achieve that experience you do not have to wait fifty years.

In order to have the inner experience, the thin veil has to be eliminated. Everybody has that experience in them – a man, a woman, a wise man, an idiot. No person is devoid of that potential. Therefore, those who are innocent and childlike insofar as the experience is concerned, shall have the experience.

All the sadhanas you have been doing are just to rend asunder that veil. Why do we tell you to surrender your ego to God and guru? Why do we ask you to work without selfishness? Why do we tell you to make your thought and mind free? Just to create a situation where that thin veil will be torn.

There is another important thing. We are not fifty, thirty or twenty; we are one. We appear to be different because we have different bodies. One electrical current flows through each and every light in this place. Only the bulbs are different, the machines are different, the microphone is different, but not the electrical energy. It is just one and not two. Therefore, there is one energy, Spirit or Self which is there in all of us. That which is in



me is in you, and in all here and everywhere. Not only men or women or human beings, but all creatures, all animals, all the objects in the world are integrated and linked through that one Self. The switches and bulbs are different. One who knows this truth knows the truth. There is no difference between you and me. You may have experienced me in the morning, but I have always been in you. The only reason why somebody did not experience and you did is because he was not in tune with his own self. When you are in tune with your own self, you

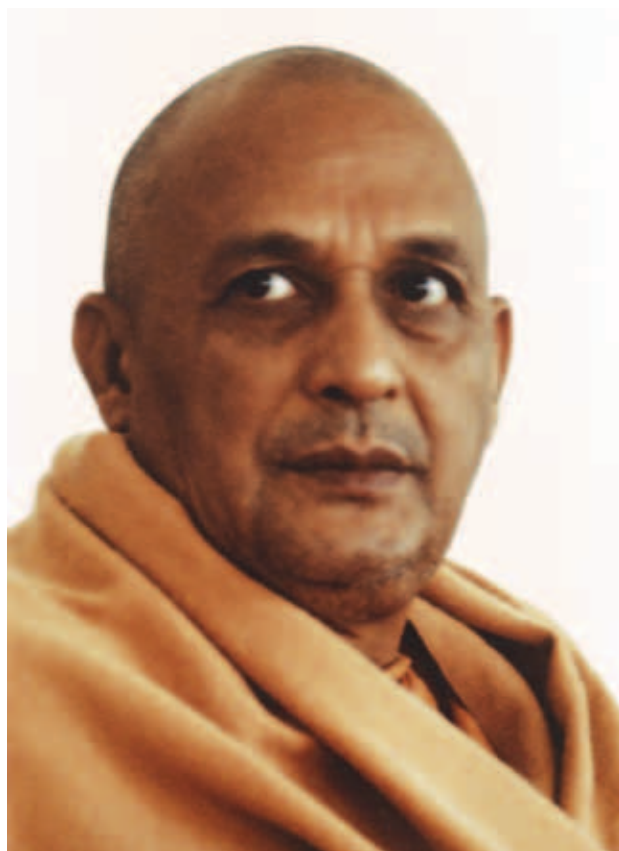
are in tune with your guru, God and the whole universe. The method of learning through transmission is a higher system of learning.

Q. How does the spirit live between one incarnation and another?

Paramahamsaji: At the time of death, the ego withdraws itself and enters into unconsciousness in the same way as a fruit becomes seed. Then, at the proper time, according to the nature of karma, the soul enters the womb of the

mother. Some are born immediately, some take time and some take a lot of time to reincarnate.

Q. Do you think it is good to know about our previous lives or is it dangerous?



Paramahamsaji: Nature has closed that chapter and from that you can understand whether it is good or bad. When you have transcended the feelings of pain and suffering, then you can know about your previous lives. Otherwise, the knowledge will only add to your sorrow.

Even the incidents of the past thirty or forty years are so painful. If you remember the failures of life in the last few years, how much agony you undergo. If you get to know about your previous lives, perhaps you would go to the mental hospital.

Many times people ask me this question. I do not know anyone's previous life, but I know the way to know it. If I tell you your previous life, I am sure you will go to the mental hospital because I am violating the laws of nature. On account of that, I will suffer and so will you.

Lord Buddha was performing great sadhana. He was the son of a king. At the age of thirty-six he wanted to know the truth. He renounced his beautiful wife Yashodhara and child Rahul. At that time he was known as Siddhartha Gautama. He threw off the royal robe and donned the ochre robe. He lived with a guru for some time and studied Samkhya. Then he began to practise austerity, but nothing came to him. One day he decided that either he realizes or he will leave the body. He was very firm on this resolve, he stopped eating and he was meditating morning, evening, night, all the time. He became very weak and was reduced to a skeleton.

One day he went to the pond for a bath and he could not come out of the water. In the mean time, the daughter of the local chief brought some porridge for the forest deity. She thought that he was the forest deity because he did not look like a living man. He took the porridge and received a little energy. He sat down there itself and attained illumination.

When he attained illumination he became aware that in many past lives he was enlightened. He also remembered that in many lives he was born as an animal though enlightened. He realized that he was Bodhisattwa in twenty-four lives. As Bodhisattwa he preferred to live in the incarnation of various animals. If such was your

previous incarnation, it is good to know. However, if in your previous incarnation you had been a dacoit, a thief, a bandit or a prostitute, it is better not to know.

Q. What is the meaning of Swami, Saraswati and Paramahamsa?

Paramahamsaji: *Swami* means one's own master. *Saraswati* means intuition. *Paramahamsa* means one who can discriminate between the real and the unreal.

Q. Swamiji, how can a disciple help to serve his guru? And how does a guru help his disciple? What exactly happens between them?

Paramahamsaji: Guru means the spiritual self, your own spiritual self. A guru can be your teacher and he also need not be your teacher. Many times you learn yoga, philosophy and many other things from a person, but he is your teacher, not your guru. The real guru is within your own self. The innermost light within you is your guru. However, you cannot see him. Therefore, you need an exact replica of that guru in a person outside. That is why guru means your own self.

The relationship between a guru and disciple must be totally intimate. Think about your relationship with your life or your breath, it is so intimate. Can you live without your breath? No, you will die. The same intimacy is between guru and disciple. You may do sadhana for many years, but it will only give you spiritual experience if you have such a guru.

Sometimes we intellectuals feel that we must learn some practices from an expert, and that is all. We do not want to have anything more to do with that person because we are very afraid of losing our ego in him. Therefore, what happens is that you practise your sadhana for long

periods, but still the light does not descend. The duty of a disciple is to surrender his total ego before his guru.

In India, there is a ritual. When you go to your guru, you carry with you a garland of flowers, a piece of cloth, fruits, a coconut and some money. These symbolize different items of your ego. The coconut represents the hard shell of your head, fruits represent desire for the fruit of actions you are performing, cloth represents the body idea. Flowers represent your tender devotional feelings and money represents your so-called attachments. These are the various forms of the ego which operate in a disciple. If you can offer your ego at the feet of your guru, then you are his disciple. If you cannot, then you are only a pupil or a student.

There was a great yogi named Milarepa. He went to his guru for initiation, but his guru did not welcome him cordially. Yet he remained at the doorstep of his guru. Every time his guru saw him, he insulted him, but Milarepa was above all this. One day, in the absence of the guru, the guru's wife gave him some meat to eat. Immediately, the guru returned and on seeing this, he was very angry with Milarepa, alleging that he had some other relationship with his wife. He ordered Milarepa to carry boulders up a hillock and make a hut there. The boy did it. When he had constructed the hut, the guru ordered him to dismantle it and bring the boulders down. This was the act of a crazy man. Gurus appear to be crazy, but in fact they are not crazy. Read the story of Milarepa. It tells you how a disciple has to behave to become a disciple.

If one can become a disciple, enlightenment is here and now. In the same way, gurus also have to behave with their disciples. The guru is a symbol of compassion, grace and blessings. But this does not mean that he should pamper his disciples. He must be like a carpenter or a

tailor. If the carpenter does not chisel and saw the wood, it will never become a good piece of furniture. A tailor cuts the piece of cloth with his sharp scissors so mercilessly and turns that into a beautiful robe.

A disciple is raw material; he has to be reshaped and refashioned. Therefore, the attitude of a guru cannot be that of a mother or a lover, and the attitude of a guru cannot be that of a policeman. The main thing in the mind of a guru is illumination of the disciple. Old habits, old attitudes, old neurosis, have to be broken down. It is natural for a person to stick to the old personality. Even after you become a disciple it is the same old story. No change in thinking, no change in behaviour, then where has the change taken place? Just to say that you have become a disciple is not sufficient. Still, the disciples want the guru to be very congenial, pleasant, comfortable and convenient.

Now, this is a very important thing which everybody has to understand. If you lend your lives in the hands of guru, then you have to follow him. If you don't have faith in him, then don't say that he is your guru. Therefore, the duty of the disciple is to surrender his ego to the guru, and the duty of the guru is to reshape the disciple.

All those who are seeking an experience must have a guru. Without a guru there is no devotion. You can be devoted to God, but you have never seen God. Whatever you have heard about God is completely spiritual and intellectual. For thousands of years, we have been brainwashed and indoctrinated, so we believe in God. There are very few people who can renounce everything for God. First, you must have an external guru. When you have completed the formalities with the external guru, then the internal guru will become clear to you. And when the internal guru becomes clear to you, God also will become clear.

Q. Swamiji, can you tell about your relationship with your guru, Swami Sivananda? Are you still in contact with him?

Paramahansa: Prior to my coming to Swami Sivananda in 1943, I was already in touch with many expert teachers



of tantra. I was already practising meditation and other spiritual things. I practised various sadhanas. I learned hypnotism, the modern systems of psychotherapy, tantric

practices in the burial ground and I also had training with a tantric yogini for some time. Then I lived with an old man who was a master of tantra, but I was not satisfied.

I knew very well that family life was not for me. I always wanted to live alone and wander alone. I never wanted anybody with me to protect, help or sympathize with. I did not like a lot of money, property and friends. So, the only way left for me was to take sannyasa. I also thought that even if I marry a girl of the same temperament and state of mind, it would not help because the moment you marry, you become a part of the greater society and you are obliged to that society. In my early years I thought society was a bundle of idiosyncrasies. Even now I hold the same opinion, more or less.

So I came to Rishikesh and met Swami Sivananda with the help of some other people whom I had met earlier. The influence was spontaneous, I did not have to assess him. I did not have to decide to stay with him. In his presence, my analytical mind became stupefied. If your mind shuts down, you will not think. That was my first experience with my guru.

In the presence of the guru, the intellect is stupefied. Only the heart grows. You don't have to think through the power of reasoning. That is called surrender. Surrender does not mean prostrating flat before a man. Surrender means the surrender of ego and intellect. But you cannot do this on your own. If there is anything difficult in life, that is surrender of ego.

I come from a very affluent background. I had never seen poverty. I knew nothing but comfort and luxury. In fact, I did not even know that man could survive on vegetables. I thought only those who were poor ate vegetables. We had many villages, thousands of sheep, hundreds of ponies and many such things. When I came to Rishikesh, I did not even have a mattress to sleep on.

I had nothing to eat, there were mosquitoes, scorpions, serpents and monkeys everywhere and the Ganga in which I bathed was very cold.

For many years I suffered from diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, paratyphoid, typhoid and many other diseases. Still I did not think of leaving that place. I used to work very hard. That was the beginning period of the ashram. In order to get my food, I had to walk four to five kilometres in the hot sun every day and return. And that was only once a day. I did not take tea and could not get tea. But I never noticed it. I never recognized that. That was the second experience.

When you love somebody, difficult things are not difficulties. You become aware of the difficulties when you have no one to love. If you love your guru or someone else, even if the whole world kicks or criticizes you, you don't understand it. The personality of Swami Sivananda was so compassionate and peaceful that I never knew the disease and sickness that I suffered from. If I look back on those years, I myself am surprised how it happened. Was I dreaming or was I under hypnosis?

My ashram in India is relatively much better than the ashram I lived in, but still there are people who have their own ego and have complaints. When you have love for somebody, how can you be aware of the extraneous experience? When you are in the warm embrace of a young boy or girl, you do not even notice the passage of time. When you are under the grip of passion and violence, you do not think of anything else. But when you are in the presence of your guru, how are you aware of yourself? Like this, I stayed with him for a full period of twelve years when he told me to go and work outside.

In my life I have seen many people whom I call magicians. I have lived with people who are great intellectuals, but it is extremely rare to come across someone who has such

love, compassion, understanding, eternal forgiveness, not only in his mind, but in his lifestyle. I can only name three such persons, no more. One was Mahatma Gandhi, another was Swami Sivananda and the third was Jesus Christ. If you lived with Swami Sivananda, you would think of Jesus Christ all the time.

When I read Jesus Christ's statement, "Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do", I thought no man could speak like this, but in the lives of Swami Sivananda and Mahatma Gandhi, this was practised. This was a very great experience in my life. When Mahatma Gandhi was about to be assassinated, the department of police wanted to guard him physically with revolvers and pistols. Rumours were already in the air that attempts to kill him were being made. The government wanted to screen the people who came to his meetings. They wanted police bodyguards to his right, left, front and behind. Gandhiji refused. He said, "The real protector is God and not the revolver. Man does not have to defend himself because he is the replica of the divine. If one has faith in God, he has to have faith in his own self. If you do not have faith in yourself, it means you have no faith in God. Then, in order to live and survive, you need worldly pleasures." That was the type of person Gandhiji was. Swami Sivananda was the same.

Anyone who asked him for anything, he gave in charity. Even if there was no money in the ashram, still he would take a loan from the market and give. He was the most generous person I have ever seen. We earn money and amass wealth by exploiting others. Nobody can become wealthy without exploitation. But when the question of helping others comes, we do not want to do it because we are misers and we have no heart. Why can't we think that God gave us the wealth only to give to others?

In so far as Swamiji's spiritual life was concerned, it was complete. The whole twenty-four hours, he used to

remain immersed in the thought of his mantra. When he was leaving the body, one lady who was by his side asked him to give his last message. He took a pen and wrote, "God is real, all else is unreal." That was the philosophy of Swami Sivananda throughout his life, nothing else.

I left him in 1956 and travelled across the Indian subcontinent. In 1963 on 13 July, I had an inner experience. That inner experience was more real than this. At that time, the direction became completely clear in my life. It was after that I started this yoga movement in 1964.

I don't like ashrams, I don't like to have disciples, and sometimes I get exhausted from all these surroundings. I want to give up the ashrams and go away in seclusion into a forest and just sit down there. When I left my parents and all that property, why make another property? When I have left all my relatives, why have these relatives? It is at that time that I always get a vision. I never know if it would last for long or for seconds. At that time, I am transported to another realm of consciousness and I am no longer Swami Satyananda. And I hear very clearly, "No, keep on moving. Don't withdraw yourself."

This has happened quite a few times since 1964. I don't want that vision at all, because I know that that is the voice of Swami Sivananda. He has many outstanding disciples and they are spread all over the world. They are in America, Europe and everywhere, and they can do a lot of work, because they want it, because they have that ambition. They want to serve. They want to help the humanity. I don't want it. I would just like to sleep, eat and sleep again, because I have renounced everything.

Renunciation has to be complete. Each and every thing you are attached to should be renounced. My house has become old and I can renounce it. My robe has become old, I can renounce it. But can I renounce the person I love? The object I love? That is very difficult.

We practise convenient renunciation. We renounce the objects which we dislike. Try to renounce what you like. That is renunciation. I know very well that sooner or later, I am going to get out of this cycle. I had written a poem some time ago:

With nothing on the body and with nothing in my hands,

Let me roam on the banks of the Ganga.

The name of Shiva on my lips all the time

And the thought of Devi and Durga in my mind all the time.

Let me not even know that I exist

And when I die, I will not know that I am dying.

That is the type of life which Swami Sivananda infused in me, and I have to follow him now. Once he told me that we are instruments; we are the medium. We have to love everybody without passion and attachment. We have to serve everybody without passion and attachment. We have to serve everybody without expectation. We have to love God without asking anything from Him. The purpose of our spiritual life must be to have the vision of the divine. God has given us everything. We did not ask for it. He has given you everything without your asking Him. Then why do you ask Him at all? He knows that you need, He knows what you deserve, He knows what you should not have. So, you must throw off desires and just submit everything to the divine will. Whether you are in pain or happiness, you are in His hands.

If you ever meet such a person, please come and let me know. Until you find such a person, keep on doing your sadhana. Unfortunately, the world today is devoid of such persons. I have been keenly and eagerly trying to discover if there is one such person around me. I find good speakers, I find very good people, but I don't find God-

intoxicated people. Try to seek, renounce and surrender to God-intoxicated people.

Q. Why does a mala have 108 beads?

Paramahansaji: One represents the Supreme Being; eight represents the manifest universe, Nature or Prakriti. The objective world is the product of Nature. And zero represents samadhi or the supreme state. Therefore, 108 is the number of beads in a mala. It means that between the Supreme Being and this objective world there is a super-state called samadhi.



Experience Beyond Matter

Florence, September 1982

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thank you for your kind welcome. With me I bring the greetings from India. It is heartening to be here and share with you certain experiences related to yoga. I have been going around the world for the last three decades in order to pass on the message of yoga and I find that yoga has influenced the course of human thinking tremendously.

Initially of course, there was doubt. Many people thought yoga was a type of religion, witchcraft or even mysticism. This happened particularly because man used to think that matter is the ultimate point in the evolution of nature. The materialistic world did not understand yoga for some time, but as the men of science dived deep into the mysteries of matter, they came to understand and realize that matter is not the ultimate in the evolution of nature. And if that can apply to one form of matter, it can apply to every form of matter.

This external experience, the perception which you have through your senses, is a product of matter. Even the thoughts, feelings, emotions and cognition which we have are products of matter. Therefore, they cannot be absolute and final. That amounts to stating that there can be and must be another realm of experience. What this means is that you can widen the possibility of your mind.

Mind is also matter, mind is not spirit, and it can be transformed and made to evolve. That has been the experience of people in the last few decades. This in my opinion marks the end of an era and the beginning of another. With the fission of matter, one era came to an end and another era begins.



Where science comes to an end, yoga begins. That is precisely the reason why in this part of the century most countries that are advanced in the realm of science, are yoga oriented. It is not at all difficult for people who are science-minded, who have knowledge of the nature of matter to understand what experience is.

An experience is man's deeper concept of himself. Dream, of course, is an experience. However, dreams may be a schizophrenic experience. Thought is also a concept of your own self; it is an expression of yourself. A piece of music is an expression of yourself, whether you play it or just admire it. A painting or a sculpture is a concept of yourself, whether you make it or just admire it. This means that the external world is an experience of the inner experience. I will improve upon this idea. The external world is a manifestation of your inner experience. And you can improve this experience. You can improve this experience to any extent. And you can also bring about deterioration of this experience. "Everything is hopeless outside" is your experience of yourself. "Everything is beautiful outside" is an experience of yourself by yourself.

In the last few decades, yoga has helped humanity to improve one's concept of oneself. But there is a point to be noted. Yoga is completely different from the science of modern psychology. Where psychology terminates, yoga commences. You cannot compare psychoanalysis and psychotherapy with the forms of yoga therapy because in yogic philosophy this body and mind and the deeper experiences are a continuity of one another and not different. Milk, yoghurt and butter are a continuity of the same stuff and not different.

In the vision of yoga, the physical matter is also a manifestation of the immutable element. That is why the practices of hatha yoga are not exercises. You cannot compare yoga asanas with gymnastics or jogging. You

cannot replace the advantages of yoga by the advantages of jogging, gymnastics and other physical exercises. The exercises aim at exhaustion of the fund of energy, while yoga aims at developing the energy. Whether it is hatha yoga or raja yoga, karma or bhakti yoga, they deal with aspects of the human personality.

Man is not only the mind; he is body as well. Therefore, he cannot experience happiness only through the mind. The body is real and is a part of your personality. The conditions of your body will not allow your mind to experience happiness. At the same time, man is not only the body. You may have good conditions of the body, but that will not ensure the experience of happiness.

Not only the body, not only the mind, man is emotion as well. Man is desire as well. He is also beyond this mind and psyche. Therefore, yoga has been designed in such a way that it can complete the process of evolution of the personality in every possible direction. That is why you have the different branches of yoga known as karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, hatha yoga, jnana yoga, etc.

A combined and integrated practice of yoga in one's life will ensure a better quality of experience within you and without you. Every seeker and practitioner on the path of yoga must remember that the various paths of yoga are to improve the quality of man's head, heart and hands. However, yoga does not end with the development of your personality. Yoga has a definition of the personality and yoga has also given a glimpse of man's spiritual, transcendental personality. One level of your personality is dependent on this mind, body and emotion. There is another part of your personality which you have to develop with another kind of mind and emotion. That is known as kundalini yoga.

Kundalini yoga, which has been referred to in hatha yoga, is part of the tantric tradition. While you have

already been introduced to yoga, it is necessary for you to also know something about tantra. The wise men have realized that the mind can be expanded and that experiences do not necessarily depend on objects. This means that if somebody is playing music, I can hear it, if somebody has painted a picture, I can see it, but I can also see if there is no picture and I can also hear if there is no music. That is also a quality of man's personality, which of course was ignored in the last one hundred to two hundred years.

Tantra says that the range of mental experience can be widened. Your mind can have an experience with the help of the senses. Your mind can have an experience based on an object. There can be an experience within the framework of time, space and object. But there is the possibility of an experience beyond the framework of time, space and object. That can happen when the present mind can expand beyond the given definitions and borders. When the mind expands beyond the borders and limitations, then a certain amount of energy is released from within.

For hundreds of years, people have been talking of nirvana, moksha, emancipation, salvation, without understanding these words properly. Buddhists call it nirvana, yogis call it samadhi, others call it salvation and liberation. That is an experience; it is not a process of quitting the world. People think that in nirvana everything is finished. No, nothing is finished. One experience finishes and another begins.

What happens when you break matter? Does it finish? No. One area of manifestation culminates into another area of manifestation. Energy is liberated from matter. This concept of energy and matter is known as the concept of Shiva and Shakti in tantra.

If you know about the different manifestations of Durga, Kali, Mother, they are nothing but the manifestation

of energy at different stages. Let us say, the present state of your existence is matter. Can you release something from it? Is it possible that another quality of experience can emanate from this quality of experience? Tantra says yes. From a material experience a nonmaterial experience can develop.

What is a material experience? Your experience with the things around you is a material experience. We meet each other every day, it is a material experience. We have interaction with things, with time, that is material experience. Man has been trying to break this ultimate definition of experience. Objective experience is not the ultimate definition of experience. If you look at a flower, that is an experience, but you can have another experience of that. For this, the quality of perception must change.

To say that this flower is only this much and not beyond this, is limiting the quality and category of experience. A matter can be experienced in infinite ways. Your present perception is one perception. Maybe this matter is like this, maybe it is not like this. Or maybe it is this and that both, or maybe it does not exist at all. This is the type of exploration of the quality of experience that yoga is trying to bring to the brave new world today.

I have already said that when the era of science came to an end, the era of yoga began. Now, here comes the most important part of yoga and, in my opinion, the climax of all forms of yoga: kundalini yoga. The tantrics and hatha yogis realized that in this physical body there is a potential force. They were not talking about a psychological force. They were not talking about a philosophical force. They were not talking about a transcendental force. They were talking about a potential force in a material body. This is the greatest discovery of tantra and yoga.

Now scientists have begun to look into this. Science is not going to discover anything, but it is going to realize

things. I am going to put this before you in a nutshell. The wise men of hatha yoga and tantra say that at the base of the tailbone, there is a very small gland. This gland is physical, but its actual action is not known to humankind. From this gland, three forces emanate. One force travels in the centre straight up to the medulla oblongata. The two other forces also travel upwards, but one from the right and one from the left, crossing each other at four centres on the path.

The force which emanates on the left is responsible for the consciousness and mental activities in your body. The force emanating on the right is responsible for life, temperature, mobility, etc. These two forces emanate from that gland, cross each other at four junctions and merge in the fifth. From the four junctions, the twin forces distribute themselves through thousands of channels to every part of your body, making you conscious and alive both. These twin forces are known in yoga as prana and chitta, translated as life and consciousness. That is what you are and I am.

Besides these two forces, there is a third force which emanates from the bottom and goes right up to the top. This force passes through these four junctions and terminates in the medulla oblongata, that is, behind the mid-eyebrow centre at the posterior brain. However, this force is not active in every person. In most people it is dormant. In some people there is sometimes a momentary activity. Sometimes when your mind is concentrated, activity is seen in this channel. When you practise pranayamas like bhastrika, kapalabhati and retention of breath, activities have been observed in this channel. When your mind becomes one-pointed, you lose consciousness of the external world of time, space and object, this channel becomes very active. These three channels have different names in yoga and that you have to study.

We are taught three types of practices in hatha yoga, raja yoga and tantra. One type is those which awaken the junctions I was talking about. One is the beginning point, one is the terminus and four in between, making a total of six. All these centres have to be purified, awakened or activated. There are practices of yoga to accomplish this. The yoga postures you practise every morning are intended for this purpose. They are not exercises. Asanas help you to awaken the six chakras. Awakening of chakras has to be accomplished before the awakening of kundalini.

Then, the middle channel which is in profound slumber, should also be awakened. When this channel is awakened, that is the second step on the path of yoga. There are certain practices in yoga which are aimed at awakening this channel. The practices of pranayama are intended to awaken this channel, which is known as sushumna. It is the pathway through which the kundalini ascends. Therefore, before the awakening of kundalini, the chakras should be awakened and this nadi should also be awakened.

Then, the third type of practices of yoga. These practices are intended to awaken the actual kundalini and direct it to the higher centres. Therefore, certain practices of yoga are meant for awakening the chakras, some practices are intended to awaken the sushumna nadi, the central canal, and there are quite a few practices to awaken the kundalini.

The seat of the kundalini is in that little gland I was talking about. With the evolution of the natural forces in man, this gland has now come to a point where man can explode it. In the thousands of years past, quite a few people have had this awakening. These people were known by various names. Some called them rishis, others called them prophets. Some others called them yogis and

siddhas and some called them fakirs and auliyas. Those who had the awakening of this supernatural force in them were known by various names in various countries at various times.

In India they have definite categories for various types of evolved people. In fact, the entire Indian cultural setup was organized to facilitate this exploration. Things are not that good today because materialism is a very powerful force. At present, it has stupefied the Indian minds also. Nevertheless, the stupefied Indian will balance himself sooner or later.

If this awakening has to become a universal event, then not merely the practices of yoga are required, but the entire social setup will have to be reorganized. People across the world will have to be retold the purpose of their existence. From the time of conception of the child in the womb to the point where you leave the body, each and everything has to be reoriented. And this reorientation has to be done with the purpose of opening new doors of experience.

Today, we are in a world where we are more or less satisfied. You have all kinds of comforts. But there will come a time when you will be prepared to kick off these comforts. Luxury and comfort keep man under constant hypnosis. Alcohol and drugs are not as dangerous as man's total slavery to luxury and comfort. He cannot get out of it. He can get out of it only when he becomes aware of something more than what society and parents can give him.

People have already begun to question. Earlier, only a few people used to question. Now millions of people in the world are striving for a higher experience. This higher experience is known as knowledge. With the practices of yoga and tantra, when the awakening of kundalini takes place, a process of metamorphosis takes place in the

realm of nature and spirit. The elements of the physical body change and the elements of the mental body also change.

It may be difficult for people to understand the whole concept today, but the future man will talk the way I am talking today. Matter will become unnecessary; matter will become insignificant. Behind matter and behind mind there is energy and there is an experience of that energy. However, you should not start abruptly at any point. This is my closing statement. You should not start these things abruptly. Do not try to influence your mind directly because the mind is nothing but an extension of the mind and body complex. Start with the body, the nadis, the prana, the chakras. Then see how your car moves. Do not start at just any point.

Many people, encouraged by this type of philosophy, take to drugs, chemicals, etc. They are very serious people, but they are not systematic. They think they can transcend the role of the body in the realm of evolution. In the final evolution of mind, matter and man, you cannot ignore either the body or the mind. You cannot even ignore the nose. You cannot ignore your stomach and the digestive system. You cannot ignore your sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. That is why this transcendental yoga begins with physical hatha yoga. It is hard to understand, but this is the truth.

The discovery of the great energy began with matter. Did nuclear energy descend from heaven? No, it descended from crude matter. Where does the experience generate from? From heaven? From a sanctum sanctorum? No, from this body and this nervous system. That is how you should be – practical, pragmatic and sensible.

Hari Om Tat Sat



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and tantra, when the
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Satsang

Florence, September 1982

Q. What exactly is mantra? Is it a good means to discover and understand one's own self? Which is the best time to practise the mantra and how is it combined with other yogic practices? How should one treat one's personal mantra?

Paramahamsaji: Many people wonder what mantra is. There are millions of people all over the world who now have their personal mantra. We hear from our friends that having a mantra is good, therefore we must have one. This mantra movement is not a new movement; it is the most ancient culture of mankind.

Of course, India has the credit of preserving or safeguarding this ancient culture of humanity. When the rest of the world was engulfed in wars, disasters, exodus and migration, it were the swamis, the sannyasins in India who preserved this most valuable treasure for humanity.

The culture of mantra is more ancient than Christianity; it is older than the Celtic culture and the Atlantis. The Cabbalist sect had their own mantras, pre-Hellenic cultures had their own mantras and the Egyptians had their mantras. Babylonians had mantras and, needless to say, the Aryans had mantras. Now everything is lost except the culture which comes from India. The ancient people know the efficacy of mantra in their daily lives.

Mantra is not just a sound. Not every sound can be a mantra. When you make a motor car, you cannot assemble any part anywhere; there is a particular place for every part. In the same way, mantra is not only a sound. It is a scientific assembly of sounds. In your piano or harmonium, there is an octave which has its range of



sounds. However, in order to bring about a melody, you must have a system. You cannot just go on pressing keys at random. Thus, just any sound cannot be a mantra. Mantra is the assembly of sound in a particular fashion.

I will not talk to you about the ancient books for the moment. A few decades ago, an English gentleman serving as a judge in India wrote several authentic books on tantra. Do you know why he wrote them? He was a justice in the Calcutta High Court and he was dictating a judgement. When he was half way through, his mind changed and he set aside the judgement and began to write another judgement. When he was half way down this one, he again changed his mind. He thought something was wrong with his psychology, but the stenographer who was taking down the notes noticed this. He said, "Sir, there is nothing wrong with your mind. The two parties involved in this lawsuit are practising some tantric ceremonies. When one completes his rites, he influences your mind."

The intelligent judge set that statement aside saying, "It is all rubbish and nonsense." Surprisingly, he could not write a complete judgement. He decided to complete it, but he could not. Then he began to investigate on tantra. He went to many places in India and consulted the pandits, the scholars. Gradually he came to understand that there is a process of awakening the force through mantra. After years of study, he wrote several authentic books in English, which were later translated into many languages. One of his books is titled *Garland of Letters*. It deals with the efficacy of sound.

Sound has frequency, velocity, magnetism and colour. It is part of the universal element. A sound is not just a voice. Of course, the sound which I am producing now has a low frequency, and because it has a low frequency, you can hear it. If my voice had a much higher frequency, you would not be able to hear it. Perhaps the mosquitoes would.

Now, in this particular context, sound has something to do with manifestation of energy. We can say that sound is energy, just like there is electrical energy and nuclear energy. It is another form of energy called sound energy. If a sound can be made to attain a very high frequency, it can work exactly like an object. This is the philosophy behind mantra.

When a guru gives you a mantra, he transfers a sound, and this sound becomes your personal sound. Every mantra that is given by a guru is suited to the disciple's personality. Initially, when you remember or chant this mantra, the frequencies are very low. But if you practise the mantra properly, in the course of time your own mantra can resonate and attain a high frequency.

According to the science of mantra, it is said that when the mantra is murmured or whispered, it is a hundred times more powerful than the mantra which is chanted aloud. If you practise the mantra with the rhythm of the breath, that is a hundred times more powerful than the mantra mentally repeated. And when you practise the mantra within the sushumna nadi, within the framework of your spine, that is a hundred times more powerful than the mantra practised with the natural breath. And when you write your mantra on a piece of paper or in your notebook, very carefully and in very tiny letters, that is most powerful. This means that each and every form of mantra has higher frequencies than the previous one.

The mantra which you practise has manifold purposes. It is true that the mantra is a method through which you can transmit the energies of your mind externally, but for one who is serious and sincere, mantra becomes a touchstone. In fact, the distractions and depressions of the mind can be completely overcome by the practice of mantra.

When you receive a mantra from your guru, the first thing is that you must practise it every day for a certain period which you decide for yourself. You must first of all fix, say, ten minutes at one stretch, either in the morning or at night. For a beginner, the use of a mala is of great importance. In ten minutes you may be able to complete one, two or more malas, but you must use the mala. After a month or two, it will be necessary for you to practise a little more. Ten minutes is to begin with, but eventually you must sit for half an hour. If it is not possible in the morning, do it at night.

During those ten minutes or half an hour, what do you do? And what should be your attitude towards the mind? I have a clear suggestion. There are five categories of minds. One is the dull mind. People with a dull mind must chant the mantra aloud. If they don't do that, they will sleep during the practice. A little better than the dull mind is the distracted mind, the monkey mind. It will hold the watch for some time, play a little bit, then throw it away and never think about it. The distracted mind has no centre. Such a mind should practise the first stage of mantra for some time and should not meditate or concentrate. Distracted minds should not concentrate or meditate with the mantra, but let the mind flow.

Sometimes, you may practise the mantra for thirty minutes, but you will hardly remember the mantra for a minute. Do not be discouraged by that because when you are practising your mantra, all these thoughts and wanderings of the mind are nothing but a process of purification of your subconscious mind. If you are patient for some time, your mind will get better.

Then there is the third category of the mind called the oscillating mind. This mind is like a pendulum; it keeps on swinging on the same route. These people should also not try to suppress, hold or block the mind. However, at the

end of the mantra practice, they must sit down quietly for two, three or four minutes and concentrate on one point.

The fourth type of mind is the one-track mind. These people should practise mantra and meditate side by side. One-track minded people are very rare. At least, among normal people I have not come across any. Some people who are insane have a one-track mind. Neurotics, psychotics and yogis are one-track minded. If you are one-track minded, you must practise more meditation and a little mantra. In fact, pure meditation begins only when you have a one-track mind. If you have a distracted or oscillating mind and you are trying to meditate, you are going to get exhausted in a few months.



The fifth type of mind is the totally controlled mind. Such people do not need mantra, yoga, meditation or guru. They have their own guru inside. You too have your own guru inside; everybody has the guru within, but he is mute and you are deaf. There is no use saying "My guru is inside me" if you cannot hear him and he cannot talk to you.

For dull people an external guru is necessary. For distracted people, both a guru and a teacher are necessary. For the oscillating mind the guru is necessary. For the one-pointed mind the guru is not necessary. He can just listen to somebody, read from a book and go ahead. And he who has a controlled mind is himself a guru.

Mantra should be practised with a natural spirit. Don't expect anything for months and years because the



path of mantra acts very systematically and slowly in the spiritual constitution. Before you can have the spiritual experience, you must clean the container. When you want to see the reflection of your face, do you not clean the mirror? Therefore, if you have a spiritual experience with a mind loaded with desires, passions, distractions and schizophrenic tendencies, you will either not understand it or if you do understand, you won't be able to handle it.

Many people have psychic experiences for many years, but that does not have any relevance in their life. Their experiences do not come true, they do not have a qualitative change in the pattern of their nature and they do not become extra intelligent or extra brilliant. It is because these experiences are coming through the impure mind.

Many times people who are having psychic experiences come to me. I believe in one thing. If there is an inner experience, it must have some bearing upon my life, an event or the future. But when you practise mantra and have experiences, they are mutilated experiences. Therefore, before practising deep meditation, you must purify the subconscious mind of its abnormal psychological patterns.

It is not a question of faith. Some people practise a mantra due to their faith. Some people do not have faith so they wonder why they should take a mantra. There are some things which work on faith and that is called religion. There are some things which do not work merely on faith; they work with faith and also without faith, they work anyhow. That is called science. That is the fundamental difference between religion and science.

Religions depend on faith, science does not. Therefore, the science of mantra does not depend on faith. Even if you do not have faith and you practise it, it works. At the outset I gave you the reference of Sir John Woodroffe, the

British judge. He had no faith, but the mantras did have an effect on him. So, the mantra which you practise should have an effect on you. Even if you do not have faith, you must practise it.

Q. How can someone who is not young and suffers from arthritis perform yoga asanas?

Paramahamsaji: The science of yoga has a branch called yoga postures which is a part of hatha yoga. These yoga postures are known to be 84 lakh. They are not exercises, but postures which represent man's evolution through nature. In various incarnations, life passed through different manifestations. The asanas are named after those manifestations.

Quite a few asanas are like acrobatic systems and many are very scientific, a bit difficult too. They can influence the hormonal systems; they can create a balance between the glandular or endocrine secretions. They can open up the suppressed supply of cortisone, adrenalin and antibiotics from within the body. They can create a balancing hormone to fight with cholesterol and other toxins in the body. By suppressing, expressing and balancing these glandular secretions, the asanas can cure many of the psychosomatic symptoms. Of course, it is not for me to give you the proof now. Hundreds of researches throughout the world have proved that the yogasana system is a system of therapy.

There is a third group of asanas which don't have much to do with hormones and endocrines. They have more to do with the energy movements in the body. To maintain the influx of energy at a proper frequency is the purpose of those asanas. Wherever there is some sort of energy block, they help to remove it. This group of asanas is divided into two groups again. The first group is for those to whom you have made a reference in the question. For

those who are totally invalid, who cannot perform their own chores, there is one small group of asanas. It is a very simple series. If I demonstrated them, you would laugh at me and say, "What nonsense!" They are called energy balancing exercises.

There is a fourth group of asanas that make your spine upright and straight, not erect, just straight. They also include mudras. Assume the asana, place your hands in a mudra, whether yoni mudra, chin mudra or some other and just stay like that. It is not necessary to meditate. You can think about your business, you can think of all the rubbish, but don't move the body, that is all. Spondylitis finished. Spondylitis is treated that way. You don't have to do any exercise.

Then there is another type of exercise which balances the negative effects of some beds. It is called anti-Dunlop asana! Sciatica, slipped disc and other problems in the spinal discs are due to your soft beds. Hard beds may not feel as comfortable, but they are very healthy for the spine.

There are different ways of practising yogasanas. One is the static method. You go into a posture and remain there for some time. This is particularly effective for spinal problems and can be practised with asanas such as bhujangasana, the serpent pose; shalabhasana, the locust pose; dhanurasana, the bow pose; makarasana, the crocodile pose. Maintain these for some time. Practise normal breathing. Usually there is a rule for the breath, but in static postures there is no such rule. If you remain in the posture for two minutes, you breathe very lightly and normally. Every yogasana has this static division. It is intended to create a greater influence on the muscles and discs of the spine.

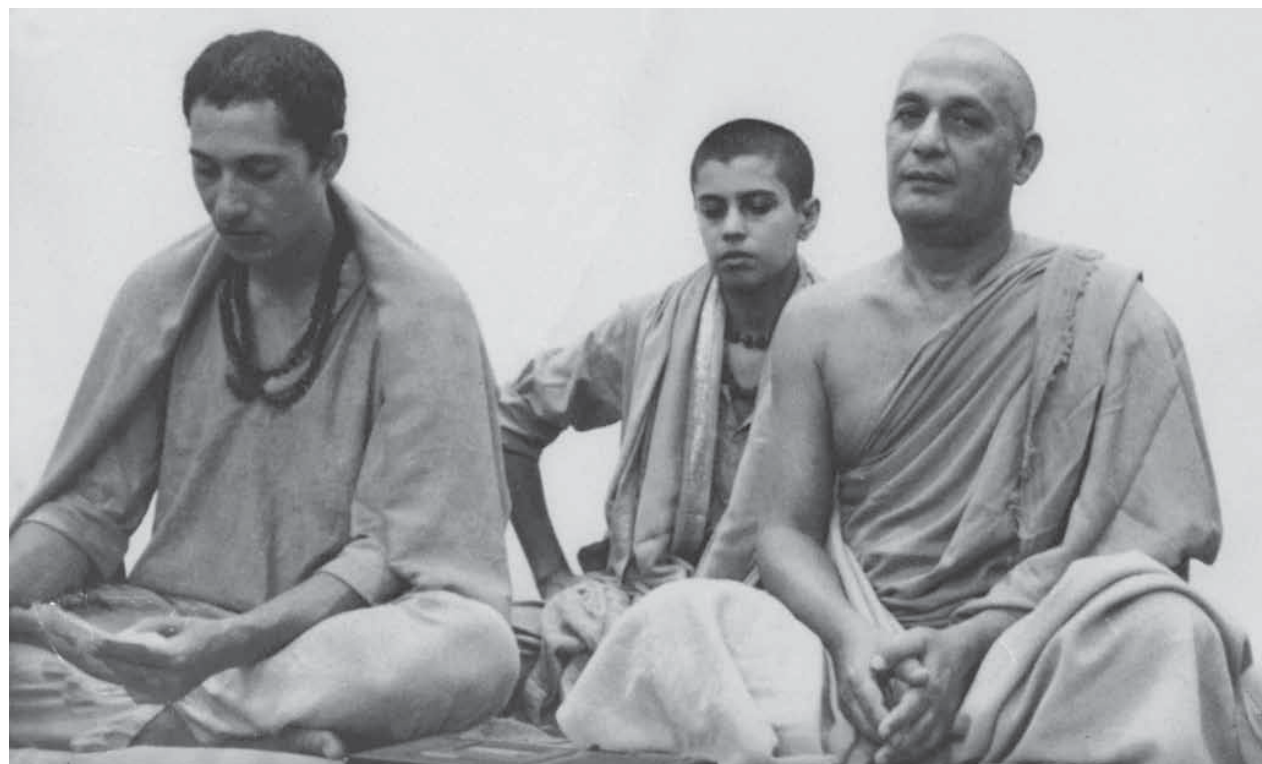
I have had some very good experiences with arthritis. Our headquarters in India is one of the biggest yoga centres in the world. We can maintain seven to eight

hundred residential students. There are about forty teachers. Some of them are outstanding and eminent doctors. People come there for yoga therapy from all corners of the world.

Psychosomatic diseases in particular are well within the control of yoga therapy. Diabetes, insomnia, high blood pressure, arthritis, slipped disc, sciatica, uterus prolapse and many other such diseases which are otherwise considered incurable, can be managed beautifully by the practice of yoga postures. In our ashram we even take mental patients, epileptic patients and sometimes, minor cancer patients. The percentage of success is very optimistic. Therefore, if you want a message for any

person suffering from arthritis, take it from me that if you know yoga, you can get rid of the arthritis.

I am sure you are aware of the role of yoga in therapy. The science of yoga postures, the science of yogic breathing, the science of the six systems of purification, the science of yogic relaxation, the science of purging the mind, the science of concentration of the mind, all these have been investigated by scientists all over the world in the last four or five decades. Although the investigations are still in their infancy, the picture has emerged. It is evident that yoga is a benevolent science. Therefore, I am completely dedicated to the promotion of yoga. I believe it is a science of benevolence and compassion for all human beings.



Swara Yoga

La Spezia, September 1982

Hari Om Tat Sat

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share with you some ideas on yoga. I bring you the greetings of Bihar School of Yoga, Munger. You have a lovely place here. I like it very much and I think it is an ideal place to practise yoga. When I came here, I spent some time observing the waves in the sea, and I found that the waves were surging one after the other and finally merging together. That is exactly what happens with our minds and emotions.

The mind, the thoughts and emotions keep on surging like the sea waves. If you wait for the waves to subside in order to have a bath, perhaps you won't be able to bathe at all. If you have to take a bath, you have to dip even with the surging waves. Therefore, one need not wait until the mind becomes quiet. Along with the distractions in the mind, thought waves in the mind, we should delve into the inner life.

For many thousand years, mankind has been trying to reach into the realms of inner experience. Every thinking mind has tried his level best to accomplish this great feat. There are many ways and means to have the inner experience. From time to time people have experimented with different paths. Some talk about karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, kundalini yoga. Quite a few have also ventured to develop the inner experience through chemicals.

The inner experience is the right of everybody. When I say this, I definitely mean it. Many times people say that only those who are perfect can have that inner experience. But I think, perfect or imperfect, both can have that experience. A theist or an atheist, both can have

that experience. It is for this reason that many different systems of yoga have been experimented upon. Out of all those systems, tantra can be separately distinguished because the path of tantra tells us that you can have that experience in spite of anything and everything, and that you can transcend the normal mind.

Today I will talk to you about one faculty of yoga from the tradition of tantra. The name of the yoga is swara yoga. It is not well known, neither in the East nor in the West. The practices of swara yoga give you a very simple path to have the experience of the inner being. *Swara* means the sound of the breath. When you become aware of the process and the sound of your own breath, that is called swara yoga.

There are three swaras. One flows through the left nostril, the other flows through the right nostril and the third flows through both nostrils. That which flows through the left nostril is known as ida nadi. That which flows through the right nostril is known as pingala nadi. When both, the left and the right flow completely, totally and freely, that is known as sushumna nadi.

It is not just a matter of chance that sometimes your right or left nostril is flowing. It is based on the rhythm of nature, which relates to the hemispheres of your brain. It is also connected with the three systems in the body. Mind is one aspect, life force is another aspect and spirit is the third aspect. Thus, mind, life and spirit combined together is you, me and everybody. Take the life out of the body, you are dead. Take the mind out of the body, it is as good as death. In swara yoga, the mind is known as chitta, the life force is known as prana and the spirit is known as atma, the self. The chitta controls the sensory nerves. The sensorial nerves control the five sense organs, eyes, nose, tongue, ears and skin. Prana controls the five organs of action, speech, hands, feet, urinary and excretory organs.

So, five organs are controlled by prana and five organs are controlled by chitta.

It has been noticed that both the nostrils do not flow simultaneously, except for some time. The flow of the breath in each nostril and its cycles is controlled by the lunar cycle. Therefore, the science of swara yoga belongs to the lunar cycle and not the solar cycle.

The lunar cycle is of fourteen or fifteen days. It does not necessarily correspond with the solar movement. Sometimes it is thirteen and a half days of the sun, sometimes it is fourteen days of the sun and sometimes it is fifteen days of the sun. On the fifteenth day, either there is a full moon or there is no moon. So, in each cycle of the moon, that is, the waxing cycle and the waning cycle, there is day one, day two, day three, day four, and so on. The days appear twice in a lunar month and the cycles are known as the dark fortnight and the bright fortnight.

When the moon is waxing, it is called the bright fortnight. When the moon is waning, it is known as the dark fortnight. So, after the full moon there is the dark fortnight. On the first, second and third days of the dark fortnight, at the time of sunrise, the right nostril is flowing for one hour and twenty minutes. After this period, both nostrils flow for some time, maybe one, two or three minutes. Sometimes both nostrils don't flow together at all, sometimes they can flow for up to three minutes. After that, the left nostril will begin flowing for one hour twenty minutes and again it will change after the same duration. This process goes on, on the first, second and third day of the dark fortnight. Exactly at the time of sunrise, the right nostril flows.

On the fourth, fifth and sixth days, the cycle changes. At the time of sunrise the left nostril flows, not the right. Then, in the same way as above, it changes over at intervals of one hour and twenty minutes. On the seventh, eighth



and ninth days, again the change comes. At the time of sunrise, the right nostril begins to flow. This goes on up to the no-moon day.

The sunrise never takes place at the same time. According to that, the rhythm adjusts itself. I have exposed many men and women to this experiment because I wanted to know whether what is written in the texts is right. The people whom I exposed to the experiment were not only Indians or Hindus, but also people from western countries. Many of them had also been non-vegetarian, men and women both. I found that in 89 percent of the cases, this rhythm followed.

There is another factor related to this. When the left nostril flows, the pranic force is weak. When the right nostril is flowing, the pranic forces are strong. The aim of swara yoga is to understand the nature of the breath and its influence on the body.

There are three types of action: mental action, physical action and spiritual action. When you are meditating, praying or contemplating on the truth, that is spiritual action. When you are walking, urinating, eating food, or digestion is going on and enzymes are flowing in the body, that is physical action. When you are worried, memorizing a poem or a song, when you are planning, when you have compassion in your mind, when you are angry at somebody, that is mental action. These are just a few examples of actions. You can classify all your actions into these three groups. What are you doing at the moment? Mental action? Yes. Physical action? No, because your blood pressure is slightly low. Your coronary behaviour is dull, the gastric juices are at a lower point, the circulation is very slow. So, it is not a physical action. It is a mental action and also a spiritual action because we are trying to feel something beyond the body and matter.

These three types of actions are presided over by the three swaras. Left swara presides over mental actions. Right swara presides over physical actions and the flow of both swaras together presides over spiritual action. This means that if your right nostril is flowing and you are meditating, you will have difficulties. Or, if your left nostril is flowing and you are meditating you will not feel difficulties, but you will not be able to progress.

When your right nostril flows, everything inside the body becomes dynamic, active, living. The inner body temperature increases, the circulation is faster, the blood pressure is accelerated, the nervous systems are agitated and the left hemisphere of the brain becomes active.



Now, at this time, if you are trying to meditate, you will have a lot of distractions. You may try to concentrate your mind, but you will have difficulties. In the same way, when the left nostril is flowing freely, you will have difficulties in meditation. Therefore, in swara yoga, the first indication is right work with the right swara, and for that purpose you will have to train yourself to maintain control over the swara according to the work you have chosen. If you have had a good lunch and you find that the left swara is flowing, you should ensure that the right begins to flow.

You must know how to change the swara. There are many yoga postures which are intended to change the flow of swara, like padadhirasana. This is just an example. You may have seen some photographs of sadhus holding a staff under their armpits. That is called a yoga danda or yoga staff. When the yogi is trying to meditate, he checks his swara first. If he finds that the wrong breath is flowing, he changes it by placing the yoga danda along the armpit. This is a temporary provision. There are permanent ways also. I am going to talk about them also.

Take pranayama for instance. One of the main objectives of practising pranayama and kumbhaka with pranayama is to awaken the sushumna nadi, that is, the balanced breath. The texts on swara yoga have said in unequivocal terms that it is foolishness to perform physical or mental action when the balanced breath is flowing. When the balanced breath is flowing, that is, both nostrils are flowing freely, if you sit for meditation you will not have any difficulty at all.

Many times people ask me, "Swamiji, can I practise meditation first and hatha yoga later?" I say no, because they consider meditation and hatha yoga as two separate compartments. They are not compartmental; they are complementary. Yoga postures are an aid to pranayama; pranayama is an aid to concentration.

Through the practice of pranayama, sushumna flows. I am using the word 'flow', which is used to refer to the flow of a river, an electrical flow or electromagnetic flow. The word flow in yoga is called *nadi*. Nadi does not mean a nerve; nadi means flow. The copper wire is not the electrical flow. In the same way, this physical body is not the flow. The electrical energy which flows through that wire is called the flow. In the same way, within the framework of your spine there are three flows, and these flows emanate from the bottom of the tailbone where there is a small gland. That gland is very tiny, and from that little mole or gland, the three nadis emanate.

Out of these three nadis, the central one goes straight through the spine. The other two nadis flow to the right and to the left and cross each other at four junctions. These centres are known as *chakras*, which means vortex of energy. It is these two nadis which ultimately influence the breath in the right and left nostrils.

The tendency of the flow is not downward. The tendency of the flow is upward. The third nadi does not flow, it is sleeping; it is dormant all the time. After every one hour and twenty minutes and after sunrise, the central nadi flows for a few moments. Or when your mind becomes one-pointed automatically, then also it begins to flow. After pranayama it flows, or when you are about to perform a criminal act it flows too. Therefore, there is a strict warning about it in swara yoga. When the sushumna nadi flows, one can either perform spiritual action or criminal action.

The suicidal terrorists have the sushumna flowing. Yes, I know it. A yogi in deep samadhi has the sushumna flowing. When you are up to some sort of assault, even a sexual assault, sushumna is flowing. When the sushumna is flowing, the whole brain is lit up. In ida, half the brain is awake. In pingala, half the brain is awake. In sushumna,

karmendriyas and *jnanendriyas*, that is, the physical organs and the mental organs, both combine with each other and you become very powerful, whether in spiritual life or in the other life. That is why you should not get up immediately after meditation and do other things. After meditation, you must sit down quietly, let the normal breath flow, whether it is right or left. Only then you must involve yourself in daily life. Otherwise, you may get very angry with your children, wife or husband.

I have had this problem myself. In my guru's ashram, I used to come out of meditation and I would just jump on people. Every time my sushumna used to flow and when I used to come out of meditation I would be completely out of control. Once I even threw a bunch of keys at my guru. My guru was a very good person. If there is anybody whom I can worship after my guru it is only Christ and nobody else. To throw the keys at him was a sin. Therefore, soon after meditation, you should not involve in the distressing activities of your life.

There are many things concerning swara yoga. It is not the proper time for me to tell you about all that. It teaches how to predict a coming sickness, how to cure an illness, how to control the swara during the day and during the night so that ida flows during the night and pingala flows during the day, so you can have a good sleep without tranquilizers or work the whole day without feeling fatigued, so you can digest your food without taking digestives. This is a different subject altogether.

In fact, I have tried one little magic of swara yoga. If someone comes to me asking a question, I can answer it correctly, at least I can know myself whether the answer is yes or no. Of course I am not going to tell you how to do that because your breath may not be rhythmic and you may get wrong predictions. I will just give you one

example. On a particular day of the week, if the questioner walks towards you from the opposite side of the flowing swara, the answer has to be no and if he walks from the side of the flowing swara, the answer is yes.

This is just an example of how predictions are made by many people in India. There are many astrologers in India who can make off-hand predictions, yes or no. They are petty astrologers. School students go and ask them, "Sir, will I pass or fail?" He will first see the day, then he will feel the breath. If it is positive, he will say, "Well, go on", and if it is negative he will say, "Pray to God." This is the science of the breath which is known as swara yoga. It has been explained in the text called *Shiva Swarodaya*. Shiva means Lord Shiva, *swara* means the breath flow and *udaya* means waking. It has translations in English and in other languages also. I have been working on this science for many years and now a book is taking shape. It may be ready by next year.

Before the practice of swara yoga, an important practice must be done. That is called concentration on your own shadow. Sit in a clean place with the sun on your back so you have a clear shadow of your body. Concentrate on the neck of the shadow without blinking the eyes and then look at the sky. You will see your own figure amplified. Do it a few times. Then, close your eyes in shanmukhi mudra.

When you are practising shanmukhi mudra, the breath can go on very slowly. Now see the changing colours inside. The colours will change because the colours which you see inside you correspond to the tattwas or the elements. There are five elements: space, air, fire, water and earth. These are the five elements which keep on flowing all the time inside the body because this body is a composition of five tattwas. It is like the flow of electrons. The different elements of the electrons are flowing one after another and there is a complete polarity of movement.

First you can decipher these elements by the colours which you experience when you close your eyes because in order to realize the swara, it is also necessary to realize which tattwa is flowing. In the one hour and twenty minutes that the left swara is flowing, it does not mean that just the left is flowing. During this period, the breath is being integrated with the tattwas every now and then. So, if you close your eyes and decipher the colour, you can know which tattwa is flowing at a given moment. This is a wonderful method of concentration.

Swara yoga is very difficult. For those who want to practise the sadhana of swara yoga, I can give a little hint. It is by no means complete. After your hatha yoga practices, concentrate on your shadow. In the beginning practise shanmukhi mudra, later you can do without it. Concentrate on the breath which is flowing and keep on concentrating on the flow of the tattwa. When the breath is changing from the right to the left, you should know how it is changing and at what point of tattwa it is changing.

There are a few moments when the *akasha tattwa*, the space element, is predominant. It does not happen all the time. Sometimes the ether element is with pingala, sometimes it is with ida, rarely it is with sushumna. When both the breaths are flowing freely and there is space tattwa, that is the time when you should switch on your mind. It will go like a rocket. This is very momentary, this is very, very momentary, may be ten or twenty seconds, because this coincidence of akasha tattwa and sushumna nadi does not usually happen and when it happens you know it. What is it? Both the breaths are free and white colour is clearly seen. Ask a question and it is correctly answered, because that is the time of intuitive experience. If you can expand that period, if you can enlarge that period, it is wonderful.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Satsang

La Spezia, September 1982

Q. To which swara does the artistic creation belong?

Paramahamsaji: Left. However, if it is combined with sushumna, then you will be a great artist. The faces, the colours will become absolutely clear in your mind and then you will be able to make a beautiful painting. But at that time the water element or *jala tattwa* must flow.

Q. Is it possible to control or check which nostril flows?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, it is possible to control the swara and also possible to know which swara is flowing. When the right nostril is flowing, after about fifteen to twenty minutes, it flows freely and the left one starts getting blocked. You can check it by pressing the nostril or by feeling the breath. However, those who are experienced don't have to do this. When they concentrate on the nose tip, they know it.

Q. Which are the colours of the five tattwas?

Paramahamsaji: Space: white; air: grey; fire: red; water: blue; earth: yellow. These are the five distinct colours. However, when the tattwas are changing there is a period of transition and at that time there is a mixture of colours. Therefore, you can experience more than nine colours. In fact, the colours of the tattwas may be experienced differently during different states of the mind. In a gross state of the mind one may experience the colour of ether as blackish with multi-coloured points of light, but in the state where you transcend the mind, the colour of ether is experienced as white.

Q. How to regulate the flow of the right and left nostrils before any physical work, mental activity or spiritual activity?

Paramahamsaji: There is a natural law, and according to that law one has to study the rhythms, and according to that rhythm one has to adjust one's work and other duties. Accordingly, you must adjust your lunch, breakfast, sleep, dinner, etc. and all other work. When we don't do that, nature compels us. We work for two hours and get a little tired. We like to relax, talk a little, gossip a little, go out a little, drink a little. Again we feel better and go back to work. After one hour and twenty minutes of hammering the nail we will say, "Hello, how do you do? What is happening?" This is how you adjust with the rhythms of nature.

The same thing happens at night. You sleep on your left side, and the right nostril flows. After one hour and twenty minutes, the left will flow. You will change your side. The moment you change your side, the breath will automatically change. So, in order to give you a better quality of sleep, nature makes you adjust with the swaras by changing the positions. When that does not happen, you have a disturbed sleep. It is also believed by many people that one should not sleep with the head towards the north. A lot has been written on it. Food time must be adjusted to the flow of pingala or the right flow. If the right swara is not flowing and you are at the dinner table, you won't feel like eating.

As long as your system is healthy, nature will help you. It will compel you to rest, to bring down the strain and exertion. I think it is important for everybody to understand that the purificatory system of hatha yoga precedes the swara yoga practices, so that the rhythms will adjust according to your day to day limitations.

Q. Is sirshasana useful for the correct flow of breath?

Paramahamsaji: This is a very good question. I have not really thought about it. Once an experiment was conducted on sirshasana in Poland. Many doctors and medical experts were coordinating in this research. They noticed that during sirshasana the consumption of oxygen was minimal and at the same time the whole brain was ventilating properly. That means the rate of ventilation was very high in sirshasana. The second research was done in Japan. That was done by a Japanese doctor of medicine, Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama. He thinks that during the practice there are extra electrical impulses with a higher voltage.

The discipline for practising sirshasana is that it should be practised when both breaths are flowing freely. This means, whether sirshasana awakens sushumna or not, you must practise sirshasana only after the awakening of sushumna. Therefore, for beginners, sirshasana is to be done at the end of the other practices. However, for an advanced practitioner, one who has been practising yoga for a long time, it can be practised at the beginning.

If you have been practising hatha yoga for a long time, you will find one remarkable change. The moment you sit down for practising yoga, sushumna begins to flow. Sometimes it may not happen, but usually it does in those who have been practising for a long time.

Q. What is the difference between God and the different cycles that repeat themselves in creation?

Paramahamsaji: God and creation are not different. Matter and energy are inseparable. For a layman, God is the creator of the universe. In the ultimate analysis, creator and creation are not two. God is not a human being. God is not limited to one place. God has no form.

He is a universal law. Therefore, time, space and object are His manifestations.

When you see the external world, you feel that it is different from the creator because you see matter with your eyes, you understand matter with your mind. But your mind is an infirm mind. The mind which we have is incapable, invalid, subject to relativity, and therefore the perception which you have through your mind and the senses is an error.

First of all, we have to establish if there is creation at all. Is this an experience or reality? Philosophers have been trying to find this answer for so many hundreds of years. We are yet to establish that your experience is real. If your experience is real, then it should not be subjected to any change. What is the definition of reality? That which cannot be counteracted by any other experience.

How can you say that this waking existence is the reality? If it is the reality, it should continue in sleep also. But when you go to sleep you forget you are a man, woman or boy. Here you are all right, but in your dreams someone comes to stab you. Since your experience undergoes a change, it cannot be the reality and what is not the reality is unreality.

After the discoveries of the great scientist Albert Einstein, physics has been delving into metaphysics. Is mind real? If mind is real, then what is the basis of the mental experience? The basis of mental experience is time, space and object. Bereft of time, space and object, there is no experience. Therefore, what is the reality of matter? Does matter exist? Or is matter an experience? You must read physics and metaphysics. You will find that they are now moving parallel to each other.

Philosophers in India have been discussing the nature of creation for thousands of years. Even in the most



ancient text, the *Rig Veda*, there is a beautiful passage, “Is there a creation? Is there a creator? Does he know that there is a creation? Or the creation is there and the creator has gone?” The text says it is a mystery. It is a mystery because your knowledge about creation is your mental knowledge. As the quality of the mind changes, the quality of the experience will also change.

It is said in the Bible, “Our Father who art in heaven.” Then it is said, “Thy kingdom come.” And then, “I and my Father are one.” Which of the three statements is true? All three. There is a state of mind when the father is in heaven. There is another level of evolution in the mind when His kingdom comes here. And the last point, no heaven, no kingdom, “I and my Father are one”. The creation and the creator are one. So, that is the answer.

Q. You say when sushumna is flowing it is possible to perform criminal actions. Till what point is the person responsible for the criminal action?

Paramahamsaji: He is responsible for it because he is creating a karma. If everybody creates this karma, then there will be a lot of disturbance. Moreover, after he has committed that karma, he will repent it. This is of course a very naughty question.

Actually, nobody should be responsible for any action. What for? I don’t work; there is some other power which is compelling me to work. I am only following the impulses of nature. I am only following the impulses of karma, I am not free. This is also a philosophy and if you consider this philosophy, then nobody is responsible for anything.

This philosophy is true, but it is dangerous. That is why it is said that in order to maintain dharma, the flow of religious consequences in life, one must be capable spiritually. Only then the higher truth is understood.

There was a very notorious king. Once someone asked him, "Why are you so notorious? Why are you so cruel?" He said, "I know what is right, but I am not inclined towards it. I know what is wrong, but I cannot refrain from it, because there is someone in my heart. You call him God. As he prompts me so I act." This philosophy is true, but it is handled by wrong men. Therefore, according to the quality of the person, a philosophy has to be given to him.

If you give sattwic philosophy to a tamasic or rajasic person, or a criminal, he will make this world a total hell. Therefore, according to the temperament, quality, nature and evolution of the person, there have to be different types of philosophical explanations. Those who are tamasic or rajasic by nature, for them the philosophy has to be according to their understanding.

The doctrine of karma, the doctrine of action and reaction is necessary for evolution, for the proper progress and development. What is the doctrine of karma? If you do good karma, you are going to enjoy. If you give compassion, you are going to receive compassion. If you give mercy, you will receive mercy. And if you persecute others, you are going to be persecuted. This is called the doctrine of karma. Like the pendulum, as much as it goes to the right, that much it will go to the left. So you should know that if you do something wrong, it is going to follow you in the next life also.

If you commit a crime in La Spezia and run away to Rome, you are going to be followed there as well. This is the pragmatic philosophy for the pragmatic people who are guided by the tamasic and rajasic forces. But those who are sattwic by nature, for them there is no karma.



In India, there is a saying. If an ordinary man is drinking you say to him, “Hey, why do you drink? It is no good.” But if a Sufi saint is drinking, people go to him in hundreds, because they think he has transcended the limitations of nature. He is beyond good and bad both. That person who is beyond good and bad is called a sattwic person. And nature excuses this man for his follies also.

Therefore, do not try to find out who is the instigator of a crime. Otherwise there will be pandemonium in the whole world and Italy also.

Q. Is there really a relationship between the moon and women’s menstrual cycles?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, there is not a direct relationship, but there is an influence. The menstrual cycle during the waxing moon is considered to be healthy. Menstrual cycle during the waning moon has the opposite effect. Now, let me elaborate it.

During the waning moon, the menstrual cycle is usually followed by a fit of depression in the nervous system. During this nervous depression, you become sensitive and teary-eyed about little things. You also get cramps in the uterus. Whereas during the waxing moon, the emotions are very high. You are gay and hilarious. This is necessary. The purpose of the menstrual cycle is to give a healthy expression to the emotions. Emotions manifest in many ways. The normal way is known to all of you, but there are also other ways of expressing emotions such as song, music, painting, art, adventure, mountaineering and so on. That is the method by which you give a healthy expression to your emotions.

Sexual expression is a normal expression which we have inherited from our animal ancestors. It is an indispensable expression I know, but it again brings a nervous depression. For the religious people it brings a sort of guilt. Ultimately,

this very basic trait of our personality is followed by a repeated complex of guilt. If there is guilt, don’t do it. But you can neither do that nor can you get rid of the guilt. Then you have a conflict within, which becomes wider and results in schizophrenic behaviour. Why are there more schizophrenics in the West than in the East? Your religion says it is a sin, it is not good. And what is the twentieth century culture? What did Freud say? What do psychologists say? They say, “Do it, it is good.”

You have two things in the mind. Religion says, “It is bad”; psychology says, “Very good.” Priests and monks say, “It is bad, you will become sick.” They say, “It is bad, don’t do it. You will become sick, you will become weak.” You go to a psychoanalyst and he says, “Do it, you will be quite all right. Actually, your mental problems are due to the suppression of sex.”

You have both thoughts in your mind and you cannot decide which is right because here you want it, here you do not want it. That is called conflict, a conflict between ego and superego. This becomes greater. And what happens? You make your mind fight with itself. You are your own enemy. You are your own antagonist. This subjective antagonism becomes keen day by day. Neither can you shoot all the psychologists nor can you shoot all the priests. Both are flourishing; one is indoctrinating from the right and the other is indoctrinating from the left. So the poor boys and girls go to mental hospitals.

It is not so in India. India has mental patients, but their problems are due to worries about food and money. In India we have a very clear concept. Everything should be done properly. Don’t clean your dirty clothes in my courtyard. Everything is an urge, you have to exhaust it, learn more from it. There is no harm if you eat meat. There is no fault if you drink. There is no harm if you indulge in sexual intercourse. This is the natural tendency

of the human being. However, if in the course of time you can refrain yourself from it the reward will be marvellous. That is the truth.



Swara yoga is very difficult. Those who want to practise the sadhana of swara yoga, I can give them a little hint. It is by no means total. After your hatha yoga practices, concentrate on the shadow.

Impression...

Thank you Swami Satyananda

Sn. Arunkiran

I was twenty years old in 1982 when my yoga teacher Egidio Baiss told me that Swami Satyananda would come to Lipica. Suddenly I knew that I wanted to be there to know my guru and ask him for mantra diksha.

I remember a long queue outside the room where Paramahamsaji received the disciples in order to give them initiation. My turn arrived and I entered the room, inside the light was gentle and there was smell of incense. Swami Satyananda made me sit in front of him and gave me a little piece of paper on which he had written my mantra. I was very touched and excited and a little bit confused so I thanked him and went out with this treasure in my hands.

I saw Swami Satyananda again the next year and on that occasion I asked him for a spiritual name. "Arun Kiran", he told me. Shyly, I asked him the meaning and Swami Satyasangananda who was seated near him, said, "The colour of the rising sun." I was impressed remembering the vision that I had when I was a child and I thought, "Yes, this is the right name."

Many years passed during which even if I didn't attend any yoga class I was still continuing to repeat my mantra and often I was thinking of Swami Satyananda, hoping to see him again and feeling him as my guru.

This is how one day, tired and deluded with my way of living, I asked myself what was the meaning of my life and what was really important for me, in short, what was

the purpose of my life. The answer was, "Yoga and my guru." So I went to the Montescudo ashram and decided to dedicate my life to yoga and my guru's mission.

I started my training to become a yoga teacher and received jignasu sannyasa from Swami Niranjana in 2006. It was only in 2007 that I could go to Rikhia during the Sat Chandi Mahayajna and see Swami Satyananda again after twenty-five years.

When I saw him, my heart filled with joy and love. Being near my guru was for me a dream cherished for such a long time. The energy of Swami Satyananda was so strong and all-pervading that often I found myself thinking of things which afterwards he would speak of in satsangs. I could feel the quality of my mind changing and filled with thoughts of love, union and grace.

The day to leave Rikhia arrived. In the evening I had to take a train for Kolkata. I was at the program and Swami Niranjana was there with us with his beautiful presence. All of a sudden my heart was overwhelmed with a feeling of love and I started thinking, "Thank you Paramahamsaji for giving us such a beautiful gift like Swami Niranjana. I really feel that I want to help him to carry on your sankalpa of uplifting humankind because this is the right thing and I trust you." In that moment I felt that I could die to protect Swamiji. In my heart I gave my life to him and I made a promise to serve him all my life. With this feeling and thought I left Tapovan. While leaving, I saw Swami Satyananda seated on his armchair outside Tapovan. He was talking with someone, but as I walked down he turned his eyes towards me and looked directly into my eyes for a second. In that moment I knew that he had perceived my thoughts and a connection was established, I felt

strong and determined, ready to go and carry on my promise. There was no need to say good-bye to him because in that glance we had already told everything to each other.

I saw Paramahamsaji the next year in 2008. Meanwhile, I had received karma sannyasa from Swami Niranjana. On this visit, the day I was leaving I had the honour and blessing to offer pranam at Paramahamsaji's feet. That was the last time I saw him.

On 6th December 2009 when I received the news of Swami Satyananda's Mahasamadhi, I was in Montescudo to accomplish my duties and look after the people living in the ashram. Swami Anandananda and Swami Shaktidhara were in India, so many things had to be done, and even if I would have liked to be with them I thought, "It is fortunate that I am here so I can carry out the many things to do to honour Swami Satyananda in this moment." Through the countless things to do I could really feel his presence and help as if he was illuminating my mind and moving my hands.

I can truly say that my guru is for me the full-stop in my life among the thousands of changeable things and events.

Subtle presence

Sn. Vimalananda

I had the good luck to meet Swami Satyananda Saraswati in September 1982 when he came to Italy with Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati. To meet him was a decisive moment in my life. I recognized that he was my guru, the skilful and steady guide on my spiritual path.



The most important experience during the seminar was to feel his presence even when he was not physically in the room where we had the program. It was like an aura of energy. His subtle presence was everywhere in the big hotel construction. At the beginning I was troubled, I was shocked and felt restless. When the moment to receive personal mantra arrived, I became upset and so worried about meeting him that my mind was completely confused. While I was receiving his darshan and mantra, I was reassured.

Mantra repetition has been so important in my life, surely it is one of the most precious gifts received in my life, but a more precious gift was to feel his subtle presence even when he was far away physically. He

inspired me through dreams, letters, books, and also through the photos and films that Swami Anandananda showed in Italy.

I received from Swami Satyananda inspiration, teachings and determination, which will always be my aids in the future. His life has been a model of inspiration. Whenever I had indecision, doubts and fears, thinking of him brought solution to my problems, developing faith and self-confidence. I offer my thanks for his presence and his teachings that I always carry inside me. I am sure that with his grace, I will be able to continue on my path, trying to give my little gift to others.

Sweetest memory

Swami Shivarupananda Saraswati

It was September the 20th and I was at the airport, waiting for Swami Satyananda to come for the first time in Trieste. I had never met him at the time, even though I was practising yoga since 1978; a practice that had improved my health and strength, but also led me to ask myself deep questions for which I couldn't find answers. I had read somewhere, "When the disciple calls, the guru comes." Even if it seemed to be impossible that a guru would come to Trieste, in my imagination he was coming because I wanted him to come.

When I saw him arrive, so short, wrapped in his 'orange cloth', as the newspapers said, and with his monk sandals . . . it seemed to me I had known him since always, the same feeling I had while meeting the person who would become my teacher in Italy, Swami Anandananda.

At the public conference he held that night, all the chairs were occupied; people were sitting even on the

floor. You could see a lot of people standing up to have a better look. The room just couldn't house the hundreds of people wanting to see Swami Satyananda.

I remember Paramahamsaji impressed me by saying that yoga was nothing esoteric, occult or magic and neither a healing science but a human science, not theoretical knowledge but a direct experience of transcendence.

Actually, many of us at the time were practising hatha yoga for fun, to keep ourselves in good shape, to heal back pain or just because we were stressed, in poor health, curious or interested by the very popular tantra of the left hand. Moreover, at the time we could purchase only two books by Paramahamsaji translated in Italian: *Yoga from Shore to Shore* and the first edition of *Yoga Nidra*, but on the newspapers he had been presented as "the biggest living personality of tantric yoga".

The short conference had me enthusiastic. Paramahamsaji had fascinated me because he had an incredible knowledge of yoga, but a really simple manner to let us understand the facets of this art. I couldn't wait to attend his course in Lipica.

Here, Swami Satyananda held a deepening seminar on shatkarma, the six kinds of purification practices, explaining them as a vital part of hatha yoga. Paramahamsaji revealed to us knowledge beyond our expectations; he told us about texts such as the *Gherand Samhita*, *Shiva Samhita*, *Hatha Ratnavali*, *Yoga Taravali*. We had never heard of these, which he noticed and said, "You should practise yoga if you like it. Leave out the rest." And then he started talking about facets of yoga we could understand more easily.

During the three days of the seminar, Paramahamsaji gave personal mantra to hundreds of people, and one of those who were waiting in line every day was me. I remember joyfully the time when he let me in; I was so excited that I didn't ask him a single question of the countless ones I wanted to, one of which was if I could



become a yoga teacher. But it was unnecessary. After asking me some questions, he said I could teach yoga, and that by doing this I will help many people. I felt an incredible joy and more energy than I had ever felt before . . . after two months I was teaching my first students.

The participants of the seminar asked a lot of questions, and his answer to one impressed me very much. The question was asked by a woman who was alluding to the other questions people had asked as stupid. She asked, "Why are you here?" and he said, "Who are you to ask this question of me? What does a mother who is serving someone really important do when her sons are ill? She leaves the service and comes to them. My sons are suffering and I am here for them, I am here to pick up my sons." Everyone fell silent, wondering about the meaning of what he had said. I started to feel like a blade of grass among others, covered by dew, vibrating and not even daring to be his daughter. "Can I be your daughter too? You know I have a deep and empty well inside, I feel something missing even if I have many things, and I don't know why. But perhaps you do." It was then that I realized that being with Paramahamsaji was more than relaxing, as when he was there I didn't even need to practise yoga, I was needing nothing. This is the feeling when you meet your guru, in my opinion. It's like falling deeply in love.

This is the sweetest memory I have of those days: the sensation of everything being clear, natural, possible and easy; that life had a meaning and that meaning is that life is the best gift we have, as it is the best opportunity to express our talents.

After twenty-eight years I can say that I have kept the word of living up to what I really am, being creative, purposeful and useful to myself and to others, just teaching yoga as he had said to me. And because of him I have now a yoga centre in his name, where me and my collaborators teach to hundreds of people what he taught us.

The presence of Paramahamsaji

Swami Jnanavilasananda Saraswati

My relationship with Swami Satyananda started with a dream. I saw that he was at my home and I was offering him tea, but he said, "Oh, no! I prefer a beer!" I was very surprised.

It was 1982. After two or three months I met him at San Sicario, Monti della Luna, on the mountain of Torino, Italy. He was there for a seminar.

Then I understood the meaning of my dream. I could know him, I could talk with him and he could accept me as his disciple even if I was an ordinary girl.

His eyes were deep and powerful, his energy was great. I met him personally, he gave me mantra and the psychic symbol. He wrote them on a piece of paper that I always have with me in my bag.

After some years, I felt Paramahamsaji's presence. I saw him in the garden many times . . . and he told me: "Come, come, come to India! Come . . ." The experience was very strong. I could not believe it. So I decided to go, and arrived at the ashram in Munger in October 1986.

I had a few meetings with him and in one of these I asked Paramahamsaji how I could overcome my emotions. He answered, "It's good that you have these emotions. If you do not experience them, how can you help others?" His answer opened a new world for me.

He gave me initiation into sannyasa. I can remember that moment so clearly. The tone of his voice was stern and sympathetic at the same time. "What is your spiritual name?" Paramahamsaji said. "I have no spiritual name," I answered. Then he wrote my name:

Jnanavilasananda. He continued, "You must teach yoga. Office, translation, help others and work hard!"

Every moment spent with Paramahamsaji was great and filled my heart with love and wisdom. I can remember when he lived in the kutir in Munger; he would sit in front of the door and call us to give us sweets and ginger candies. I remember his voice floating with resonance as he sang early in the morning. Another unforgettable image in my mind . . . it is Rikhia. Paramahamsaji is sitting in front of the fire, it is 5.30 am. We can see the colours of the dawn, the smoke envelopes him, his image and the colours are like a dream, you can feel his incredible energy.

Some days before Paramahamsaji's Mahasamadhi, I was giving a yoga class and suddenly I could feel him telling me, "I'm going, I'm going away." "Where?" I said and he answered, "I'm going, I'm going away . . ."

I want to thank Paramahamsaji for his teachings through yoga and for the strength he has transmitted to me to live with love and integrity. Thank you, Paramahamsaji!

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Sn. Dayaswarupa

In September 1982 I read about an Indian guru named Swami Satyananda in the local newspaper who was giving a public lecture in Trieste and after that he would conduct a program in Lipica, Yugoslavia (now Slovenia). I had been practising yoga for seven years following different methods, and I was interested in getting a new perspective. I was actually looking for

God or one of His manifestations who could show me new horizons: my guru.

So I went and I was impressed when our eyes met, so sweet and smiling, while I was entering the program hall. I felt he knew me, I had to come to listen to him because it was as if we already knew each other. He spoke in English for forty-five minutes and Swami Anandanada translated into Italian, everything was so clear and simple. In spite of all the people in the hall, a total silence was pervading. The use of the microphone was just a metaphor and not even necessary.

Paramahamsaji used the metaphor of the microphone to explain that it has a positive and a negative wire to enable the electricity to flow. Similarly, inside our body also there are two different channels, one positive and one negative for enabling the flow of prana. He explained all this in a simple, scientific and philosophical way in such a peaceful atmosphere, giving much more importance to the experience than to mere knowledge.

I was finally beginning to understand. Until then I had been quite pessimistic, depressed, confused, with no enthusiasm. I could see no future, I was totally disappointed. I knew about the existence of God, I had studied different religions and philosophies and I had read about the lives and teachings of great saints of the past, but I had never met them, I could not talk to them or be with them and ask them questions. But at that moment I realized that I had such a saint before my eyes. I was still doubtful and looking for something wrong with him, but everything was just perfect. The atmosphere was divine, no gestures or words were inappropriate, he was full of compassion for everybody.



Finally, a superior 'being' was in front of me in whom I could see the Way, the Truth and Life.

What he was saying was not clashing with my beliefs or my faith; on the contrary, it was just a confirmation. He was talking to the whole of humanity, not only to a part of it. During the satsang I never felt I needed to ask any questions, what he was saying was exactly what I needed to hear. I was aware that he knew what I was thinking about and he showed this to me so many times in order to clear my doubts.

On September 23, I asked for mantra diksha and psychic symbol; I was totally satisfied, I needed nothing else. That was the most amazing day in my life; I was happy, calm, I felt in peace and I didn't understand how I could feel so well. It was as if all my worries had been cleared, I was feeling so regenerated. Getting back home, the same street and the surroundings seemed so different; there was something that I could not really understand, but what was it? My entire existence had changed and that was all I was aware of.

Four years later I asked for karma sannyasa and when I saw my spiritual name, Dayaswarupa, I started doubting. How is it possible that a person like me gets such a beautiful name? Maybe he was wrong. I could not believe it. Then I realized that he was right; the essence of compassion was what I had to realize during my life and try to manifest. During my spiritual journey I realized the path I was on was the right one; I just had to go on seriously and sincerely knowing that what I was doing was good and right for everyone.

As a karma sannyasin I understood that only by offering my time and strength to a higher goal, something in which I believed, I could be happy

and at peace with myself. So I started to spread his message. This was how I could propagate the teachings I received: action, give, love and serve. I was feeling satisfied and receiving grace upon grace, I was getting better and I was receiving more than I was giving. As a yoga teacher I realized I had so much to learn. I started a course, teaching only what I knew and what I had experimented with during my practice. With the Satyananda method, my students started to feel good, being aware of their body and getting relaxed with simple techniques. I realized I had a good start,

I knew I had to keep studying and practising, going to seminars and whenever possible to be in the presence of my guru for his darshan. His teachings and his life were such an example for me. Whenever I followed his teachings I was right, he made me a better person, I managed to express my talent, but I am sorry not to have done more, not to have loved him more.

I want to thank him for everything he has given me and for how he made me feel; feeling loved and accepted is the best thing I have ever experienced. I will be thankful for ever.

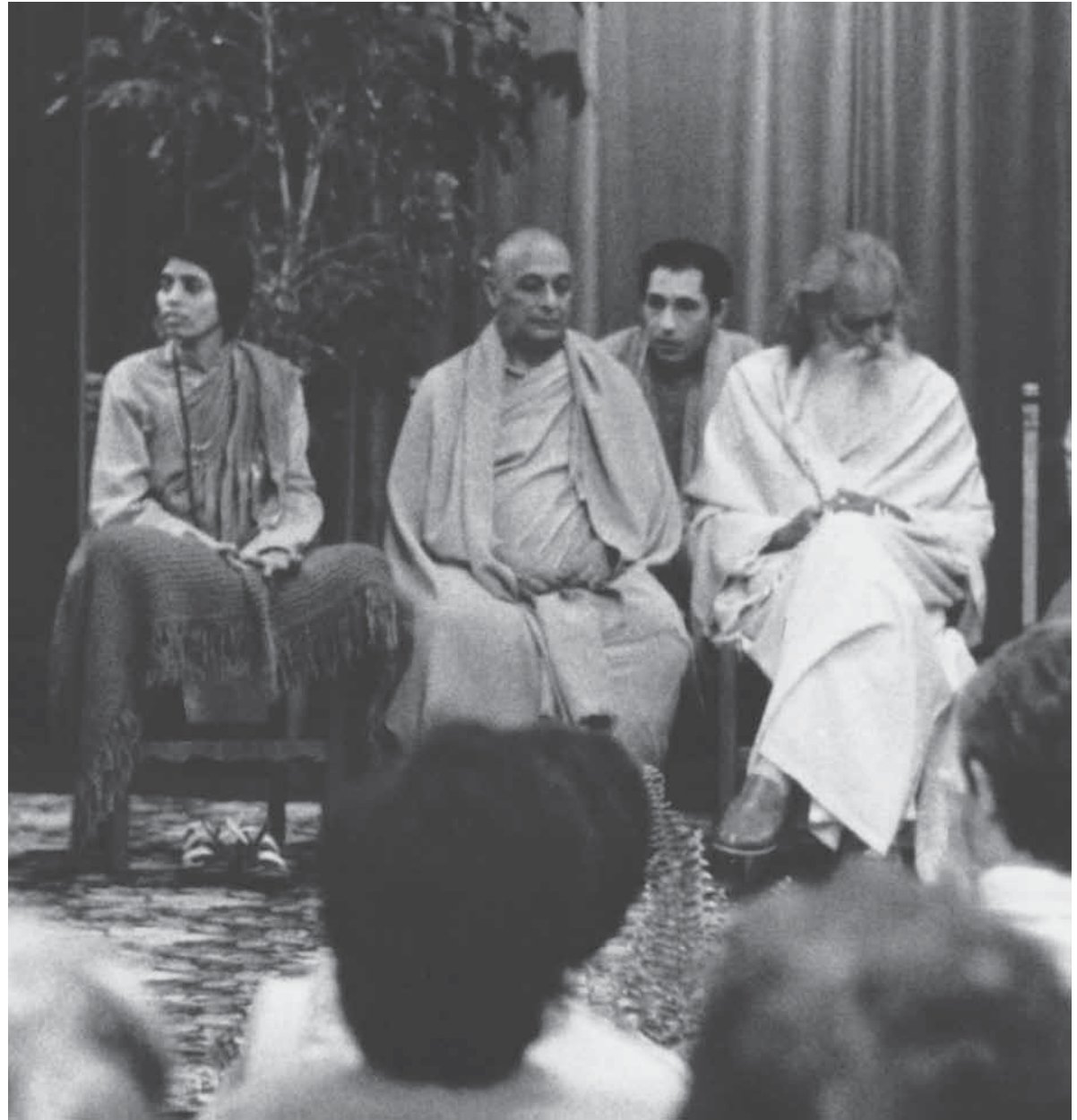




Swami Satyananda in Italy
1983

1983

In 1983, Paramahamsaji returned to Florence in Italy where he presided over a three-day seminar held at Coverciano, a retreat centre in the hills surrounding Florence. There Paramahamsaji gave lectures and satsang on 'Raja Yoga Sutras of Patanjali' to a gathering of 300 people that came from all parts of Italy. Many were initiated into mantra.



The Raja Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Florence, February 1983

Hari Om Tat Sat

Yoga is a very important science for man's total development and therefore it is important for us to understand that we do not set any limitations to the practices and to the science. When we are talking about yoga, we are talking about a very vast subject. You should know that there are various phases of yoga. There is karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga. There are other yogas as well. Karma yoga improves one's relationship with one's life. Bhakti yoga improves one's relationship with one's emotions. Jnana yoga improves the quality of the intellect. Hatha yoga improves the quality of the body and raja yoga improves the quality of the mind. However, in this conference, I will be talking on raja yoga.

Every yoga has an authentic textbook. Raja yoga also has a textbook and its author is Patanjali. Therefore, the book is known as *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*. The book contains very small sentences, or *sutras*, discussing yoga. The sutras of raja yoga talk about the control of mind because the mind is a great obstacle in one's spiritual and worldly life. If your mind is weak, then you suffer in this world. If your mind is not concentrated, you can't be successful in life. If the mind is sick, the body also becomes sick. There are so many diseases caused by sick minds. It is not necessary for me to prove that here. Through the mind you suffer in worldly life.

If you have control over your mind, then you can be a very happy person; if you have control over the mind,

then you can be a very successful person. Most people in this world do not have control over their mind. Even those who are religious and who believe in God do not have control over their mind. That is why they do not succeed in their religious life. So, everybody has to understand one thing: the mind is a great friend and the mind is a great obstacle at the same time. If you have control over your mind, he will be your friend. If your mind is not under your control, he is your worst enemy.

I will give you an example. You are travelling by a horse cart and the horses are out of control. Think of what can happen to you. If you have a car and its brakes are out of order, can you imagine what can happen to you? Your car has very good acceleration, but no brakes. You know how to think, you know how to fantasize, you know how to make plans, you know how to become emotional, you know how to activate the mind. But you don't know how to control it.

What happens when you control the mind? In raja yoga it is clearly said that if you can control the mind, you can have mental power; if you can control your mind, you can experience peace. If you can control your mind, you can meditate and attain the highest spiritual experience. If you can control your mind, you can improve the quality of your performance.

Now you understand how important the mind is and why raja yoga emphasizes mental control. But the question comes: how to control the mind? When you try to control the mind, you find it very difficult. You sit in prayer, in the sanctum sanctorum, but your mind is not there. You sit in your office for your business, your mind is not there. You have certain bad habits in life and you want to eradicate them, but you can't.

Only a few days ago, I met a gentleman who had been declared a cancer patient. I told him that he should not





smoke. He told me that he agreed with me, but he did not know how to give up smoking. This is the tragedy of a person who does not know how to handle the mind.

Two years ago, one businessman came to me who was an alcoholic. His liver had gone bad. The medical people said that he was suffering from liver cirrhosis. When he came to me, I told him, "Give up alcohol." He said he agreed with me, but did not know how to handle his mind.

Even as the body becomes weak, in the same way the mind becomes weak. You have a physical body, you can

see it. But please remember that you have many more bodies. You look after your physical body because you can see it. You take care of your physical body by dressing it properly, by eating good food, by giving it comfort and rest, and when the body is sick, you go to a doctor for medicine. But have you ever thought in the same way about your mind?

You can't see the mind, but there is a mental body which becomes sick and develops illnesses. Therefore, in yoga, the mind is a very important item. To control this mind, you must go through certain practices. These practices must be done constantly and regularly. If you are erratic and whimsical, then yoga practices do not succeed. Many people practise for a few days and then give up, and many people practise a lot in the beginning and later give up.

There is a definite way, a sequence or system of practising yoga. Just as you go to primary school, then middle school, then college and university, in the same way in yoga there are steps. There are eight steps in raja yoga. If you want to reach that gallery, you will have to climb twenty-two steps. You will have to go step by step. Of course, a bird can fly directly, but not you. There are a few people for whom these steps are not necessary, but for most people they are necessary. For little children it is not necessary. They can go four steps at a time, but old people have to go step by step. Those who are weak must go step by step. Those who are strong can jump over steps. Thus, there are eight steps in raja yoga.

The first four steps are preparation. The latter four steps are actual practices. Now, please understand this very well. The first four steps are preparation, the latter four steps are the practices. What are the first four steps?

The first step is known as *yama*, which means discipline, self-discipline. There is a difference between

religious discipline and self-discipline. In yoga we have self-discipline, but in religion there is no self-discipline. The book says it, therefore you do it. In self-discipline, I feel it and I do it. I am not an alcoholic, this is my discipline – I have decided not to be an alcoholic. A Hindu does not drink and a Muslim does not drink because his religion says so. He would like to drink, but his religion tells him not to. That is called religious discipline.

I am talking about self-discipline. These disciplines are five in number. The first is truth, the second is non-violence, the third is continence, the fourth is non-accumulation and the fifth is honesty. These are the disciplines which you have to realize for yourself. When you follow these disciplines, then your mind becomes very easy and when you do not practise these disciplines, then your mind is tense all the time. You are always in a state of neurosis. There is neurosis about money, men, women and sex. There is anger and vengeance all the time. There is a constant desire to accumulate. This causes tension and confusion in your subconscious mind; therefore, when you go to a church or pray, you are not there.

Now, I am talking and you are listening. If you bring a group of musicians and they play drums, will you be able to listen to me? No. If you want to listen to me, you will have to ask them to keep quiet. Our subconscious minds are corrupted. There is a lot of dirt inside. There are tensions, inhibitions, complexes, guilt, insecurity and manias. We are full of all that. Why? Because we have not decided to discipline ourselves. Of course we follow our religious discipline. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, all follow their religious discipline. But that is not spontaneous, that is not genuine, that is not real. We follow those disciplines like a hypocrite.

The second step in yoga is a systematic life. You have to create a system in your life about purity, contentment,

regular study of spiritual books, simple living and prayer to God. These five must be done with absolute regularity. There are many people I have seen, yoga teachers, yoga aspirants – when I go to their apartments, Oh my God, it is so horrible! Their clothes are dirty, hung here, there and everywhere. Their bathrooms are full with toiletries. There has to be an absolute regularity in the system of your life.

Then come asana and pranayama. Asanas, yoga postures, pranayama, breathing techniques, are necessary to improve the balances within the body. Asanas create hormonal balance. Pranayama improves the oxygen system in the body. At the same time, through the practice of asana and pranayama, you can improve the activities of your brain.

In this physical body there are two forces. One is a sympathetic force, the other is a parasympathetic force. These two forces must be balanced if you want to have control over your mind. These two forces are so important that without asana and pranayama you cannot handle them. If you sit in a yoga posture for meditation, you must be sure that there is a balance in the energies; in the forces. That these two forces are balanced is indicated by your breath.

The left nostril is one force and the right nostril is another force and both these nostrils do not flow together, but one after the other. Whichever nostril is flowing, the opposite side of the brain is active at that time. The brain, or the superior brain, has two hemispheres and both do not work at the same time. They work for one hour twenty minutes or one hour forty minutes alternately, and each hemisphere of the brain has certain faculties.

Through pranayama, you can improve the behaviour of your brain. You can control the influxes of your mind to a great extent. Pranayama is the fourth step and the

last of the first grade. It is so powerful that if anyone is suffering from mental weakness, depression, etc., he can take to the practice of pranayama and be greatly benefited from it. But of course, there are rules and regulations controlling the system of pranayama. After pranayama, you have four more stages and with these the practice of raja yoga begins, the practice of mental control begins.

The mind is a force and it can be controlled. Mind is like a wave; it can be controlled. And when it is controlled, the mind becomes very powerful. You can increase the frequency of the mind and you can decrease it as well. Have you seen a magnifying glass? When you put a magnifying glass against paper, the paper will burn. If you put the magnifying glass against dry grass it will burn. What is that? It is the concentrated light of the sun. It is not the diffuse light of the sun; it is the concentrated light of the sun. Sunlight does not burn paper; sunlight does not burn a piece of cloth. But when it is concentrated, it will burn them.

In the same way, the mind should be concentrated. For achieving concentration, you need a point to concentrate upon. On what will you concentrate? If you want to concentrate on an idea, it is very difficult, because an idea is fluid, not concrete. This object is concrete, the flower is concrete, I am concrete, I have dimensions. A photo has two dimensions. A thought also has dimensions, but you don't know that. In order to concentrate, you must have an object with dimensions, and during concentration you must only be aware of that object and nothing else. If anything else comes into your mind, you have to stop it. However, concentration is very difficult, I tell you, it is very difficult.

I will give you an example. I am talking to you. There are five telephones here and one begins to ring. I take the receiver off and the second telephone rings. I put

the receiver off, the third rings. I put the receiver off, the fourth rings. I put the receiver off and the fifth rings. I put the receiver off and now I can talk to you. In the same way, in the practice of yoga, you have to put five receivers off. These five receivers are: eyes, ears, skin, taste and smell. They are known as sense perceptions and they feed the mind all the time with impressions and go on creating excitement in the brain. These five senses bring more information, more news, more stimuli. Therefore, the senses must be hypnotized.

How to hypnotize the senses? There are practices. By many practices which you will be learning in this seminar, you can hypnotize the senses, though only for a short time. When you are talking to friends in the house and your children make a lot of noise, what do you do? You send the children away, though only for some time, so that you can talk with your friends. In the same way, when you want to concentrate, you must silence the sense perceptions.

One of the most powerful practices for silencing the senses is mantra. The mantra should be practised in different ways. A mantra is a sound wave. It creates a frequency in you which hypnotizes the senses. Before concentration, we can also practise bhasrika pranayama, then *Om* chanting, then kirtan or singing, then trataka or constant gazing. Finally, we practise concentration.

Concentration can be practised on many objects. These objects are both internal, subjective, and external, objective. In the *Raja Yoga Sutras* there are many examples of such concentration. There are two types of objects for concentration; one improves the quality of concentration and the other improves the force of the mind. For example, if you concentrate on the throat or on the navel, or on the mid-eyebrow centre, the mind becomes very powerful. And if you concentrate on a saint, your guru or light, your

mind becomes peaceful. Therefore, concentration has two effects. Concentration on certain objects gives you peace of mind and on certain other objects gives power of mind.

Now you understand clearly that concentration can have a twofold effect on the mind; one is peace and the other is force. Of course, peace of mind and power of mind are integral, integrated. There are some people who want power of mind, so they become telepathists and clairvoyants; they can read others' thoughts, they can control their habits or control others' minds. These abilities are known as siddhis. Perfection of the power of the mind is *siddhi*. Mind has potential; mind is powerful,



The second step in yoga is a systematic life. You have to create a system in your life about purity, contentment, regular study of spiritual books, simple living and prayer to God.

but it has become weak. That is one side of concentration. Many people practise it and become siddhas. They may develop their siddhis to any extent. They bless, that is a siddhi. They give accurate guidance, that is a siddhi. They can heal the sick, that is a siddhi. Of course, they can also misuse this power. That is the mundane side of yoga. This is not the spiritual side of yoga.

Concentration can also give you peace of mind. What is peace of mind? Have you seen a calm and quiet lake, without any waves? When there is a storm, there are waves and when there are no storms, there are no waves. Sometimes, through the practice of yoga, your mind becomes waveless; it has no fluctuation. There is total awareness. There is a wonderful experience of bliss. You don't think at that time, you don't sleep, you don't move or say anything. That is the meaning of *shanti*, peace.

This peace is an outcome of concentration. Of course, to begin with, you must know how to sit, how to concentrate and so on, which you have to learn from your teacher, from me or from books. After you have attained peace of mind, then you must go in. What does 'going in' mean? Not in the heart, not in the stomach, not in the brain. It is an expression, that's all. Beyond the body are the senses, beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is emotion, beyond emotion is intellect, beyond intellect is the Self, and beyond the Self, the Light. When I ask you to go in, I mean in this order.

In the night when you sleep, you go beyond the body. When you go to a hospital and take chloroform, you go beyond the body. In meditation, you go beyond the body and the senses and when you concentrate on an object, you forget everything outside. For some time, you forget yourself, you forget the space around you, you forget the

time, you even forget what you are doing. What remains then? Only the object of your concentration.

If it is your guru, he is there. If it is a flower, it is there – only the flower and nothing but the flower, neither me nor space, nor mind. This is called *dhyana*; this is called meditation. At this point, the mind becomes totally different. You may be Mr A, Mr B, Mr C, but in meditation, a transformation takes place. The body is the same, the religion is the same, but the mind is not the same. A complete metamorphosis of the mind takes place. You are reborn in the same body. It is really a wonderful experience. There is an experience beyond that, but I do not have the time to talk about it because we are within time and space now.

What I have given you is a bird's eye view of the *Raja Yoga Sutra*s of Patanjali. These sutras say that the main purpose of yoga is to realize your ultimate identity. Who you are, that's the identity. We have identified with wrong things. You have identified with the body which is mortal. You have identified yourself with your name, it's imagination. You have identified yourself with the senses and the mind, which is not true. You have identified yourself with a nation, which is incorrect. All that we identify ourselves with is relative and finite. We have to identify ourselves with the cosmos.

Now, coming to the last point. Why do you practise yoga? To have control over the mind. Why do you want to have control over the mind? If you don't have control over the mind, you will have accidents. What is an accident? Unhappiness is an accident. A painful life is an accident. If you have control over the mind, can you change the tragedies of life? If you have control over the mind, can you change your habits? If you have control over the mind, can you change the body also? The answer of yoga is yes.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Yoga Nidra as a Practice of Pratyahara

Florence, February 1983

Hari Om Tat Sat

Yesterday, I was talking to you on the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. Patanjali gives eight stages of progressive yoga. Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. These are the eight progressive stages of yoga taught by Patanjali.

The purpose of asana is to make the body steady and comfortable. In the physical body, there are poles of energy. These poles of energy are always in imbalance. By the practice of asana, you can bring about a balance in these poles. When you sit for meditation for a long time, then you need more energy inside the body. And this energy should be directed to the higher centres in the brain.

Most important of all the practices is the practice of pratyahara. Pratyahara is the fifth stage in raja yoga and it is the first stage in the practice of mental control. In fact, raja yoga begins with pratyahara. Yama, niyama, asana and pranayama are preparations. What is pratyahara? Disconnection between the senses and the mind.

Your brain and mind receive constant influxes through the senses. These influxes are passed on to the brain. These impressions disturb the mind, at least during meditation. There are various categories of obstacles in the mind. One kind of disturbance is external; the second type of disturbance is internal. These disturbances must be

eliminated before the practice of meditation. Therefore, the practice of pratyahara is very important.

Pratyahara can be understood as sense withdrawal. It can also mean separation of the sensory medium and the brain, or it can also mean the practices of introversion. It is a very difficult word to translate. When your senses are linked with objects, that is called the extrovert tendency. When your mind is withdrawn on something inside, that is called the introvert tendency. There are many practices which can help you to perfect pratyahara. In fact, many of the yoga practices which you learn are practices of pratyahara. The practice of *trataka*, constantly gazing at one point, is a practice of pratyahara. Mantra repetition is another method of pratyahara. And one of the most powerful practices of pratyahara is yoga nidra.

The practice of yoga nidra is compiled from tantric philosophy. It is so powerful that it works immediately. It is more effective than any other practice. When you take to the practice of yoga nidra, you do not have to fight with your mind. In fact, the practice of yoga nidra is so scientific that you can understand it easily. Just as you sow a seed in the ground, in yoga nidra you sow a seed in your mind. It is also a practice of relaxation.

What exactly happens in yoga nidra? When you are lying in the pose of relaxation, the suggestions given in yoga nidra go very deep into your brain. When you concentrate on any part of your body, the stimulus is immediately transferred to the higher centres of the brain. Within your brain there is a centre for each and every organ of your body. For example, your thumb has a representative centre in the brain and so does every other organ of the body. When you are practising yoga nidra, you are actually working on your brain. A lot of scientific work has been done on the effects of yoga nidra. During the practice, you are working through the external organs of the body, the

gross organs of the body, but the effect is immediately transferred to the higher centres of the brain. As you go on practising, you go deeper into your mind.

The mind has many dimensions. This dimension in which we are living at the moment is called the gross mind. In the gross mind you have to depend on external aids of experience. However, when you practise yoga



nidra, your consciousness gradually changes. You can go into the subconscious mind and you can also gradually go into the unconscious. The subconscious mind is known as the subtle body, some people prefer to call it the astral body. When you enter into your subconscious mind, you come across your samskaras.

These samskaras are the greatest disturbing factors. Just as you have seismic currents passing underneath earth, you have samskaras within your subconscious body. Whichever thought comes in your mind at any time is a product of that subconscious thought. Just as the grass on the ground grows from the quality of the earth, what you think is produced from inside.

Sometimes you are very happy. Sometimes you are very sorry. Sometimes you are very angry. Sometimes you are very depressed. Sometimes you are elated. What is that due to? That is a product of your samskaras. A samskara is like a seed in your subconscious body. When you go deep into meditation, these samskaras come up and disturb the mind. They come in the form of thought, feeling, visions. Therefore it is necessary that you fix them properly in the initial stage. That is why the practice of yoga nidra is of great importance.

Many times when we try to meditate, we make a mistake. We try to fight with our own minds. When a thought comes in our mind during meditation, we try to suppress it. And if we are not able to suppress the thought, we feel very sorry. Many times when we meditate and thoughts come in our mind, we just give up meditation.

There are three great obstacles in meditation. One is thought waves, the second is visions and the third is sleep. These three obstacles have to be overcome. In order to overcome them, you have to use different methods, not the same.

The most powerful obstacle in meditation is sleep. While you are meditating, you become unconscious, you fall into profound sleep. Therefore, it is very important to perfect the practice of yoga nidra, because here you are practising not to sleep. All throughout the practice of yoga nidra you must listen to the instructions. You should not miss them at all. Many times when we practise yoga nidra, we fall asleep, we begin to snore and we think that was nice. The purpose of yoga nidra is not to sleep, but to conquer sleep.

I can give you an example of mine. I can sleep and read a book at the same time. If you want, you can ask about the contents of the book. I will be snoring, you can hear me snoring, but I will be reading the book. I am snoring, but I know what is happening in the room. It is a very important experience. You can relax, but at the same time you can operate.

In deep sleep, you become inert, you don't know anything. You can't read anything. You can't hear anything. You can't talk. But in yoga nidra, we are developing a new faculty. What is that faculty? We are relaxing completely. It is the same relaxation which we get in deep sleep, but we keep our mind awake. Without that awakened mind, we cannot listen to the instructions of yoga nidra. This will help you later in meditation.

There is a misunderstanding about meditation. When you sit for meditation and come out, you say, "Oh, I meditated very well, I was not aware of anything." This is not meditation. In meditation the mind becomes expanded, you are completely aware. The inner awareness is developed to the maximum. However, this awareness is not directed to the sense experience. This awareness is directed to the symbol of meditation. Suppose you are meditating on light. When you are meditating on light, you have to be constantly aware of only the light. Therefore,

development of awareness is very important in meditation. When you take chloroform, the consciousness shrinks. Thus, in the practice of yoga nidra, you should try to maintain constant awareness and try not to sleep. During each and every practice of yoga nidra you must make sure that you are listening to each and every instruction.

Consciousness is like a flow and this flow should not be interrupted by sleep. Therefore, it is said in yoga that a yogi must conquer sleep. This is a phrase which is often misunderstood. Many people think that a yogi should not sleep. If you do not sleep you will go insane. When it is said that a yogi should not sleep, it means that he should sleep in the yogic way. How does a yogi sleep? This is important for everybody to understand. All the senses must sleep, the body must sleep, but the mind must not sleep. The self must be kept awake all the time. If you are concentrating on the Shivalingam, the whole night you can see the Shivalingam. That is called yogic sleep or yoga nidra.

Nidra means sleep. There are two kinds of sleep. One is the gross sleep, the other is the yogic sleep. In gross sleep, the body is sleeping, the senses are sleeping, the mind is sleeping, the self is sleeping. You are like a dead person. You do not know yourself at that time. You do not know what is happening outside. That is gross sleep and all animals have gross sleep. All human beings who do not understand yoga have gross sleep. Yogic sleep, however, is a wonderful experience. The whole night you are awake within and what are you seeing inside? Either you are repeating the mantra, or you are seeing your symbol, or you are seeing light, or you are experiencing bliss. This is the inner experience in yoga nidra. But all these experiences should be spontaneous.

In yoga nidra, you have control over your dreams. You do not dream erratically. Therefore, the practice of

yoga nidra is important for those who want to develop in spiritual life. This is concerning the raja yoga system.

There is another aspect of yoga nidra. It improves the quality of mind. I will give you an example. During the practice of yoga nidra, make a resolve and it will come true in your life. There is a state of mind where an idea becomes real. A six-year-old child once came to my ashram. Her parents brought her to me. Her problem was bed wetting. At night I made her sleep next to me. When she was about to fall sleep and a bit drowsy, I woke her up, called her by her name and ordered her that when she wants to urinate in the night, she should wake me up. She went back to sleep. After some time, about three minutes later, I again woke her up and gave her the same instructions. She again went to sleep. Within three minutes I again woke her up and repeated the instructions. She stopped bed wetting. This is how the mind responds in yoga nidra. Yoga nidra creates a slightly deeper state in the mind. This is an example of therapy.

If a person is suffering from mental problems, or if he has certain bad habits which he wants get rid of, then he should make a resolve, before and after yoga nidra. With such a resolution, you can definitely change bad habits, change your nature, change your voice, change the colour of your hair, because you are handling the mind. You are dealing with a powerful state of the mind. There is a state of the mind which is very powerful and very effective, and can be effectively used in various physical and mental diseases and habits.

I will give you another example of my experience. I had an Alsatian dog. I trained him through yoga nidra. You know what dogs do? Every now and then they sleep and suddenly they get up. They look right, look left, up and down and then again they go to sleep. I studied that and at exactly a particular moment I used to instruct the dog.

You know what instruction I gave him? I ordered him that nobody should touch my bed. Whenever the dog used to doze, I would tell him, "Nobody should touch my bed." And it happened; nobody could touch my bed, he would get furious. You can influence even an animal's mind. But you don't understand the laws of the mind. If you have any problems or difficulty in life, you try to solve it through your reasoning or intellect. We have great faith in the intellect, reasoning and logic, but we fail.

I had a friend who used to smoke a lot. The doctor told him not to. He decided not to smoke, but he couldn't give it up because he was trying to solve the problem through the mind, the intellect, reasoning and religion. He didn't succeed. He came to me and told me that he wanted to give up this habit. I said, "Forget it, don't give it up." I gave

him an idea, "Oh no. I will give up." He practised a resolve in yoga nidra and he succeeded. What I am trying to tell you is that through yoga nidra, you can develop a state of mind which is very fertile. In that fertile mind, you can put any impression. However, that impression should be positive and systematic.

This is about the therapeutic aspects of yoga nidra. I will give another example from my experience. About eighteen years ago, a child came to me. He was four years old. He joined my ashram. I wanted him to learn from a school. He did not do it. So I tried yoga nidra on him. He used to sleep next to me. And when he slept I used to read to him the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Vedas, the Bible, the Koran, everything. I did this every day for one or two hours. While I was talking to him I would record



the talks. He would always be sleeping. In the morning when he got up, I would ask him to hear the tape. I taught him this way for three or four years. I taught him yoga, all the religions, physical sciences, geography, history, mathematics and many other subjects. I ask you to believe me. After three years, I did not teach him anything.

That boy left India at the age of ten for north Ireland. Then he lived in Europe, South America, Australia and the US. On his own, without anybody's help, he became a master of religions. If you meet him any time, talk to him on any subject, he is better than me. Now he is twenty-two. He is now with me in Munger. In the month of January I called him back from his foreign travels and installed him as my successor in India. I resigned and I retired from the office. I was the official head of the Bihar School of Yoga and many institutions. I handed the responsibility to him. Now this is the effect of yoga nidra on a child.

I have experienced the positive effects of yoga nidra on many diseases. It works wonderfully on nervous depression, high blood pressure, insomnia. In fact, it is more powerful than hatha yoga. Nowadays I tell everybody: practise yoga nidra, if it doesn't work then practise hatha yoga. In yoga nidra you are dealing with the problem through the mind, and the mind is more powerful than the body. Mind can cause cancer. Mind can cause heart attack. Mind can cause many problems in the body. If the mind can cause problems, then it can also solve problems. A negative mind causes problems, an impure mind causes problems, a weak mind causes problems. A positive mind solves problems. It is a very simple science. In your garden, you sow flowers and you plant cactus. In the same way, in your mind you can plant any thought. That is why yoga nidra can help in diseases which are physical in nature.

I remember a lady in Tasmania. She had a very big tumour in her uterus. While practising yoga nidra, she



made a resolve, "My tumour will drop." It dropped. She was examined medically. She had no tumour. What a wonder, isn't it? Do you believe that a thought can influence an object? You believe it, I know. But when you come to the point, you fail. A habit is a product of the mind. Success and failure are products of mind. Love and hatred are products of mind. Depression and happiness are products of mind. Eczema and asthma are products of mind. Constipation and diarrhoea are products of mind. The mind controls man's entire life. Therefore, it is necessary for all of us to know how to handle the mind. Like a good farmer, first soften the soil, then sow the seeds. And when you sow the seeds, you must examine the seeds very well.

There are two important practices of pratyahara. One is yoga nidra and the other is antar mouna. This is also a very important practice. What is antar mouna? Watch every thought. Watch every experience. Watch every sound. Watch everything that is happening around you. Do not withdraw your mind. Do not concentrate the mind. Let the mind move. This is antar mouna. Many thoughts will come into your mind. Watch them carefully. While you are watching the thoughts, you will be drawn out by a sound. You should hold the mind at that time. This is the practice of antar mouna. This is very powerful. When you are suffering from diarrhoea, you know what happens. You go to the toilet. Suppose you take a medicine to stop it. The diarrhoea will stop, but the toxins will remain in the body. Therefore, the diarrhoea must be allowed to happen. In the same way, the thoughts that come out of your mind are within you. They don't come from outside; therefore, you should let them come. If you stop them, there will be a crisis. You can also practise antar mouna along with your mantra. When you are practising the mantra and thoughts are surging in your mind, you must watch the thoughts.

After pratyahara, the next stage in raja yoga is dharana, or concentration. *Dharana* means placing or fixing the mind. In concentration, we try to fix our mind on one object. There are many objects on which you can concentrate and the effect of each object is different. You can concentrate on a flower, flame, blue lotus, sun, moon, star, a saint, a yantra, a mandala or your guru. There are thousands of objects on which you can concentrate, but the effect is not the same.

Each and every object has a different centre of influence. Certain objects create energy in your body and certain objects create relaxation, peace of mind, shanti. That is why sometimes we have trouble. You say, "After I began practising concentration, I became restless. Should I stop?" People think that something wrong is going on. It's not that. You must have been concentrating on an object which was creating force and energy, and due to that you became restless. Sometimes you concentrate in the night and then you are not able to sleep the whole night because you are concentrating on a particular centre which creates energy or force. Therefore, all the centres of concentration are divided into two. Some give you peace of mind, one-pointedness and relaxation. After the practice, your mind is very quiet. But there are certain symbols which make you restless because they create energy, and these centres are intended for psychic powers. You can study about these in the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. The chapter in which this is mentioned is called 'Vibhuti Pada'.

For this reason, mantra, yantra and mandala as symbols of concentration should be properly ascertained from the guru. If you concentrate on this microphone, God only knows what will happen. It is not a question of what you like. The question is what are you like. Everybody is not the same. Our natures are different, our thoughts are different, our destiny is different. We are born at different

times, different places. Therefore, our signs have to be different. Just because you like me, you concentrate on me, that is not correct.

There are six chakras in the body. Each chakra is related to the brain. If you concentrate on mooladhara chakra, there is a great explosion. It explodes fear, anxiety, sex. If you awaken swadhisthana chakra, it explodes many things. If you concentrate on manipura chakra, it awakens something else. If you concentrate on ajna chakra, it improves your awareness and experiences. Therefore, when you concentrate on mooladhara and swadhisthana chakras and awakening takes place, you have a lot of difficulties. You are thinking about fear, depression, hysteria and sex all the time. One almost gets mad. That means you are awakening the energy. You will be surprised at the results. Sometimes you may ask your guru, "I am concentrating for peace of mind. Why am I getting disturbed?"

First of all, you must decide what you want. Do you want shanti or do you want siddhi? You can't go both ways. The path of shanti and the path of siddhi go diverse ways. In the path of siddhi, you develop mental powers. If you do not misuse them, you may go high. However, there is a point at which you must fall down. Many great siddhas who had great psychic powers had a bad end in life. If you want shanti, peace, if you want inner experience, then go the other way. That is the path of Purusha. That is the path of awareness. In yoga it is clearly said, Purusha and Prakriti are two forces. Prakriti is Nature; it has shakti. Those who follow the path of Purusha attain illumination. They are known as *jivanmuktas* or liberated souls. Raja yoga opens both avenues for us. It is our choice; we have to make a choice. And after we have made the choice, we should approach a guru who is appropriate for that particular subject or science.

Hari Om Tat Sat



First of all, you must decide what you want. Do you want shanti or do you want siddhi? You can't go both ways. The path of shanti and the path of siddhi go diverse ways.

Satsang

Florence, February 1983

Q. How can one recognize one's own outer guru?

Paramahamsaji: When you are a seeker searching for something, you can definitely realize your outer guru. There is an unseen relationship between guru and disciple. When you have faith, you can at once recognize him.

Q. When a person comes to you, do you receive negative and positive sensations about his character and health?

Paramahamsaji: No, I don't, because I see the divinity in everybody who comes to me. Whenever you come to me I put myself in touch with your divinity, and through that I am able to understand your problems.

Many years ago, I could and I did, but then I realized that it was not a good practice. Why should I react to someone's negative vibrations? Nobody is totally negative. Everybody has a spark of light and we should see that light.

Q. When a person feels a void and loneliness in life, what can he do to find the strength to continue?

Paramahamsaji: This is the problem of the West. Join yoga classes. Join yoga seminars. Create a fraternity of spiritual-minded people and meet occasionally. Practise your sadhana and read the books by illumined people.

Q. I would like more clarifications on how to practise the nasal cleansing and if this can cure polyps. I've been operated on twice.

Paramahamsaji: The nose cleansing can be done with water, catheter, oil, melted butter or cold water. This should be learned from a teacher who can tell you what is good for you. In polyps, even if you have been operated on twice, neti kriya is very helpful.

Q. Swamiji, what do you think of abortion in the first few weeks of conception?

Paramahamsaji: Up to two months, it is okay, because it is not another soul. After two months it is better not to, because you are interfering with another soul. But even in the first two months one should not do it. It is not good for a woman's health.

I am not a puritan. I am telling you from a scientific point of view. In the first two months the embryo is like a tumour. After two months, it is another person, another life. Another soul has come into you. You have no right to do it, but everybody has to make their own decision. I am not an authority on it.

Q. My eyes often get red and watery; sometimes I feel as if I have sand in my eyes. I already do neti every morning. What else is there to do?

Paramahamsaji: Remove constipation. Practise kunjla kriya and concentrate on a candle flame.

Q. If I have a crooked nose because the bone is crooked, is it possible that my character changes since there is no balance between the two nadis?

Paramahamsaji: It does make a little difference, but if you practise sutra neti, it will help you a lot. At the same time, if any improvement can be made through surgery, it should be done.

Q. Can the cleansing of the stomach cure psoriasis? How is it to be done?

Paramahamsaji: Two practices are good for psoriasis. One is kunjla kriya, the other is shankhprakhshana. Shankhprakhshana should be continued for many days in a reduced version.

Q. Is there a practice to cure nearsightedness?

Paramahamsaji: Trataka on a black dot.

Q. What is the relationship between mantra and yantra? How can we choose a yantra and, if you concentrate on your ishta devata, do you need a mandala?

Paramahamsaji: Ishta devata and mandala are the same. The yantra should be chosen with the guidance of a guru. There is definitely a relationship between mantra and yantra. Every mantra has a yantra and every yantra has an ishta devata. You can choose either a yantra or an ishta devata. Ishta devata and mandala are the same.

Q. Do you need to concentrate on the ishta devata or yantra while you are repeating the mantra?

Paramahamsaji: When you are concentrating on the mantra, you can also concentrate on the ishta devata. The mantra can be practised with concentration and without concentration both, but it is better that in the beginning you do it without concentration. When you have had a lot of practice in mantra, then you can do it with concentration.

Q. You said not to suppress thoughts. Can the substitution of good thoughts for bad ones be positive?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, you can substitute negative thoughts by positive ones, and when it is not possible, then you should observe your thoughts. You can try both ways.

Q. Can you talk to us about bhakti yoga?

Paramahamsaji: Bhakti yoga is a way to divert your emotions from the mundane to the Supreme. You love the things of the world. You have attachment for many things. You have love for your children and family. In the same way, you must love God and you must attach yourself to God. That is bhakti yoga. In bhakti yoga, you must dedicate yourself to the remembrance of God.

Q. How does one practise antar mouna?

Paramahamsaji: I will tell you in brief. Sit down. Listen to all the sounds that are coming. Become aware of all sounds around you. This is the first practice. The second practice is to be aware, "What am I thinking?" This is so that whatever thoughts come into your mind, you see them. Go on practising like this. The rest you will have to learn from your teacher.

Q. Swamiji, during the practice of hatha yoga, I often feel a difference between the left side and the right side. Sometimes one side seems longer or wider. This morning the right side nearly disappeared into the left side. In halasana, when I bring the legs back to the floor, it seems to take a very long time and it is a torment to me. I have a feeling that I am falling over a cliff. When the legs reach the floor, I feel very tired physically, but happy to have made it.

Paramahamsaji: From this it means that you should not do halasana, because in my opinion, halasana is creating an imbalance in the pranic rhythm. When you

feel one side bigger and another side smaller, there is an imbalance in the ida-pingala relationship and this also means that you should practise nadi shodhana pranayama properly.

Q. I would like to know what you think about the religiousness of yoga. What is the relationship between religion and yoga?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is an offshoot of tantra and it has no basis in religion. In religion there is God, in yoga they do not talk about God. It is primarily a science of physical and mental well-being, and therefore you can utilize yoga for your personal evolution.

Of course, there are many people who practise yoga as a religion, it is perfectly all right. A Hindu can practise, a Muslim or a Christian can practise yoga, but they must remember that yoga is a science and not a religion. There is always a difference between science and religion.

Q. How many ways exist to awaken the kundalini? What can you say about saha-maithuna?

Paramahamsaji: *Maithuna* means intercourse; *saha* means together, in community. When you hold intercourse together and in community, it is called saha-maithuna. This is a very ancient tantric practice. I am not going to tell you about it because this is not the right assembly. In western countries, the Gnostics talk about it and many people practise it.

There are many ways of awakening the kundalini. Pranayama is the most powerful method. Hatha yoga is a method of awakening the kundalini. Raja yoga, in which you suspend your breath for some time, is also a method for awakening the kundalini. Fasting is also a way for awakening the kundalini and so are chanting kirtan and mantra. So,

there are many ways of awakening the kundalini, including saha-maithuna.

Q. What is the woman's role in tantra and in the spiritual evolution of man?

Paramahamsaji: In the universal plan, woman is Shakti. She is the active counterpart of man and that is why she is brought to man by the form of social marriage. Physically both look alike, but they are different poles of energy. Their relationship with each other is spiritual. In the form of mother, sister, wife or daughter she plays the part of Shakti. Therefore, in tantra both are considered one. The right side of Shiva is masculine and the left side is feminine. The right side is pingala and the left side is ida. Therefore, in tantra there is a tradition of receiving initiation from the mother. This is still practised in certain parts of India and there is also a tradition of receiving initiation from the wife.

In tantra, the physical relationship between both is considered spiritual, because it is through maithuna or sexual interaction that awakening of kundalini takes place. The people who are materialistic don't understand it. For them sexual interaction is only for pleasure, or only for procreation, but it has a deeper meaning than this. The sexual behaviour has been designed by nature, which everybody must understand very well. Sexual behaviour is not designed by man or the government. It is a natural law and the purpose is for awakening. In this the female plays a major role. In materialistic society, the man plays a dominant role. In spiritualistic society it is the female who plays a dominant role. In the tantric tradition there are many practices intended for this purpose, and the sexual relationship between both is a perfect art. It is not passion, it is not animalism; it is spirituality. When concentration of mind is achieved,

when passions are conquered, then maithuna becomes a way to the awakening.

According to tantra, in the scheme of spiritual evolution of man, the female is most important and you will be surprised to hear me say that the first creator of the universe is female and not male. In your religion, God is a man. In many religions God is a man, a Father, but it's not true. The primal power, the primal creator, is female. She is the womb for the whole of creation and it is from her that the other gods are born. This is a very important thing which everybody has to understand. It is in this sense that in tantra the female is considered supreme. This is a very important science and everybody should study it.

Q. Some say that tantra was born in Egypt and then brought to India. Others say the opposite. Who is right? Is it true that the Egyptian civilization was tantric?

Paramahamsaji: It is a very difficult question to answer. That tantra was born in India is evident from the books that are available. That tantra was born there is evident from its culture. That tantra was born in India is evident because today, India alone preaches tantra. All other cultures and religions speak against tantra.

Tantra is basically matriarchal. All other religions in the world are patriarchal. In India, the religions are matriarchal. We worship Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Mahamaya. Is there any other religion in the world where the lady is worshipped? Therefore, definitely, tantra emanated from India.

The Egyptian culture has been very ancient. The Hindu, Egyptian and Chinese cultures are very old. There was a time in Egypt when tantra was practised, but it could not survive there. It was destroyed by society. It was destroyed by the invading Romans. Don't mind it. It was also destroyed by many invading cultures.

There are two distinct types of religions; matriarchal and patriarchal. In the matriarchal religions, the mother, the female is supreme. In patriarchal religions, the father, the man is supreme. Judeo-Semitic religions are patriarchal, Islam is patriarchal, Christianity is patriarchal. Hinduism is matriarchal. So, from this you can understand where tantra emanated from. Tantra was prevalent throughout the world once upon a time. The pre-Christian era Celts were also practising tantra. The South American cultures of the Aztecs and Incas also practised tantra. These tantrics are alive even today in the West. They are known as Gnostics. The Gnostics, even today, talk about tantra.

The current of tantra is very powerful and the tradition of tantra has influenced the western society. Western society, the way it is, is not influenced by Christianity. Your religion is Christianity, that's all right. There is no denying that you are all Christians, but your lifestyle, your social culture, is not as per Christianity. The principles of Christianity are different from the life you lead. If you think deeply, you will agree with me. Your social behaviour is influenced by the tantric tradition, which you have inherited from the Celtic culture. This is a very important thing which the research scholars have not noted.

The psychic temperament of the western people is not the contribution of Christianity. Christianity is a straightforward religion. It talks of purity, it talks of continence, and what kind of a life are you leading? Therefore, tantrism is best suited to westerners and if they follow the path of tantra, there will be less mental problems. Very few people will have to go to mental hospitals, because there is a tug-of-war between your religious faith and your tradition. Sigmund Freud was also influenced by this tantric tradition and that is why he based his psychology on that principle.

Q. What methods of birth control do you suggest – yogic methods? Are there ways to stop ovulation?

Paramahamsaji: There are many ways of practising birth control in yoga. The first practice is, don't ejaculate. For that you have to practise vajroli kriya. Secondly, you have to practise vipareeta karani mudra. By practising vipareeta karani mudra, you can control the production of sperm and when you practise vipareeta karani mudra, it can stop ovulation temporarily. Thirdly, siddhasana and siddha yoni asana also help. These two asanas should be practised for a long time.

In tantra, there is another method of total birth control. That is called amaroli. Amaroli is auto-urine drinking. It is not as bad as wine! Let us talk about it; it doesn't matter if you don't take it. Urine contains many hormones. Experiments have already been done. One important enzyme that it contains is urokinase, which is very good to arrest heart attacks. Another important hormone which it contains is prostaglandin. Prostaglandin kills the ova in the womb and therefore birth control is achieved. I have written a book on this. It has not been translated in Italian. It is in English and Hindi, and it is a research manual. A lot of research has been done on auto-urine practice.

Q. I have read of the existence of two subtle channels besides sushumna and they are vajrini and chitrini. Can you tell me about these? What is the gate of Brahma, situated at the bottom of chitrini? I would also like explanations on kanda.

Paramahamsaji: In hatha yoga and tantra, they talk about 72,000 nadis. In some books, they talk about 130,000 nadis. Out of these, ten are important. Out of these ten, three are considered supreme. These three nadis are ida,

pingala and sushumna. Ida flows on the left side, pingala flows on the right side and sushumna flows in the centre. Ida nadi carries the mental energy, pingala nadi carries the pranic energy and sushumna carries the spiritual energy. Sushumna flows in the centre of the spine.

Nadi means pathway. It is through the nadis that the energy flows. Just as electricity flows through cables, these energies flow through those channels. Inside sushumna there are two very fine pathways. They are known as vajrini and chitrini. They are so fine that they can only be experienced in deep samadhi or deep meditation. They are directly connected to sahasrara chakra.

Sahasrara chakra is at the top of the crown of the head and in the crown there is a small cavity. This is called the cavity of Brahman. These nadis are connected with that cavity and at the bottom, they are connected to the scrotum. The scrotum is known as kanda. *Kanda* literally means a bulbous root or knot. The kanda is present in the man's body in the testicles and in the female body at the tailbone behind the cervix. It is a very small gland, a very small ball. This is the seat of mooladhara chakra. This is the seat of kundalini shakti, and it is from there that she wakes up and passes through sushumna, vajrini and chitrini during the awakening of yoga. Finally, she goes to sahasrara chakra with illumination.

I will suggest a few books to read on this, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Maha Nirvana Tantra* and *Devi Bhagavatam*. *Devi Bhagavatam* is a Sanskrit text that talks about the glories of Shakti and these things are explained in great detail there. It has English translations.

Q. How can it be understood that the road indicated by you is the right one? Can only our heart tell us? Is it true that one can reach the highest peak in different ways? I do not feel carried away in this way.

Paramahansaaji: The path of yoga is subject to experimentation. You don't have to accept it. You should use your reason. A lot of work has been done in yoga by scientists. The effects of yogasanas and pranayama have been exposed to scientific scrutiny and they have realized positive results. Experiments have been conducted on the effects of mantra. Experiments have been conducted on the result of yantra and they have discovered positive results.

Now they are working on the effects of meditation. How does it affect the brain? How does it influence all other systems of the body? All this is going on and the scientists have come to the conclusion that yoga is a beneficial and reliable science. In many countries they are working on scientific experiments. So, as far as scientific proof is concerned, you have to accept yoga.

Now, so far as spiritual life is concerned, there is enough proof about yoga. Throughout history, yoga has produced people of enlightenment. From this you can understand that the path of yoga is the right path. There is no dogma in it, no sectarianism, no compulsion. If you want to practise raja yoga, do it. If you believe in God, practise bhakti yoga. If you believe in reason, practise jnana yoga. If you believe in mysticism, practise kundalini yoga. If you believe in humanitarianism, practise karma yoga. You have to choose the right path for you. The signboards are already there.

There are many people who do not want to practise bhakti yoga because they don't believe in God. Many don't want to practise raja yoga because they are not mystics. They don't want to learn self-control, they want to contemplate. Let them practise jnana yoga. By a process of thinking also, you can come to realize the truth, but not everybody can do it. There are people who only like to do karma yoga. Therefore, the path of



yoga is the right path because it keeps many doors open for everybody. If you do not believe in anything, then practise hatha yoga. At least it will give you good health. Practise pranayama, it will give you better oxygenation and remove carbon dioxide. So, you have to practise yoga after proper reasoning. You do not have to do it because I say it.

Satsang

Florence, February 1983

Q. What should a person who wants to become a yoga teacher do?

Paramahamsaji: In order to become a yoga teacher, you have to first realize that you are going to help mankind. Then you should become a teacher by undergoing training. You can do that in Italy itself.

Q. Since I know five kriyas, can I teach them to others?

Paramahamsaji: You can always teach, but the important thing is you must first understand the limitations of your pupils.

Q. To a beginner who is practising asanas, is it good to teach the shatkriyas, or should you teach them later, to avoid negative reactions.

Paramahamsaji: Shatkarmas are six types of purification of the body. Sometimes they should be taught before the postures and breathing and sometimes they can be taught during the practice. If the pupil is very weak, then you can teach him later. The practice of neti, nasal cleansing, can be taught at any time. The practice of kunjal, auto-lavage, should be taught later. The practice of shankhaprakshalana, total cleansing, should also be taught later. But all these things should be decided by the teacher himself, looking at the capacity of the pupil. If you are taking to special practice of pranayama, it is important the shatkriyas are practised beforehand.

Q. Can we teach and practice intensive pranayama with people who are beginners and have not gone far ahead

with asanas or to old people, maybe with the exclusion of kumbhaka?

Paramahamsaji: Pranayama should be taught according to the capacity of the aspirant. Even kumbhaka or retention can be taught. To a beginner, however, you should not teach retention or kumbhaka. In the same way, the intense kind of pranayama should not be taught at the outset. First the pupil has to be trained properly. After he has been trained, you should teach him pranayama step by step.

Q. What influence can the practice of nadi shodhana and the balance of ida and pingala have on a long cold? The person knows jala neti.

Paramahamsaji: The practice of nadi shodhana pranayama has a very positive effect on long colds. The cold which we suffer from is due to imbalance in the thermostat system in the body. In this physical body you have heaters and coolers, according to your requirements. When this system is disturbed, then you have long colds. After the practice of jala neti, practise kapalbhati. After kapalbhati, practise nadi shodhana pranayama. And when you are practising retention, then you should practise bandhas. Ida nadi is the cold nadi and pingala nadi is the hot nadi. Therefore, a balance between the two is brought about by the practice of nadi shodhana pranayama.

Q. I would like to know if there is a relationship between the right nostril and left nostril and the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Paramahamsaji: The left nostril and the right nostril are connected to the two hemispheres of the brain. Therefore they are related to the two nervous systems, sympathetic and parasympathetic. What we call ida and pingala in hatha yoga are the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Q. What are the remedies for ulcers, nervous depression, cervical arthrosis and retroverted uterus?

Paramahamsaji: For ulcers, yoga nidra is the best. For nervous depression, pranayama and concentration. Asanas like the pawanmuktasana are for cervical arthrosis. For retroverted uterus, practise surya namaskara.

Q. How can one cure progressive blindness?

Paramahamsaji: When progressive blindness afflicts a young person, it is very easy. He can practise sirshasana and many other practices. However, when it afflicts an aged person, it becomes a bit difficult. Then he has to practise eye exercises, trataka, neti kriya, standing before the rising sun and facing the rising sun with eyes closed.

Q. What is the main goal of life?

Paramahamsaji: The main goal of life is to realize one's real nature. What is the purpose when a man goes to a mental hospital? To become normal. What is the definition of a normal man? One who knows himself. We don't know who we are. That is the goal of life. We are not the body. We are not the senses. We are not the mind. This is a motor car, that is all. This is a chariot. There is an in-dweller in us; there is a driver and a passenger. A chariot has five horses, two wheels, one driver and one passenger. Are you the driver or the passenger? The chariot is not important, but we think, "I am the chariot, I am the motor car." The goal of life is to realize who you are.

Q. If someone earns or makes a lot of money, should he give away his money so that he lives in accordance with the rule of no accumulation?

Paramahamsaji: The money which we earn should be distributed. The wealth accumulated by one belongs to

many. If one uses rightful means in life, he can never accumulate wealth. Accumulation of wealth arises from exploitation. Therefore, one should definitely distribute the money. This will strengthen your renunciation. This will make your mind relaxed and also purify your heart.

Q. Swamiji, how can I reconcile the calm of mind with the duties of father and husband, especially in the modern, excited world of industrialized work?

Paramahamsaji: I think you should read the *Bhagavad Gita* because it is not possible for me to tell you in this limited time what you should do. This is an eternal problem. This is not an easy thing to answer and this is the problem discussed in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Q. If a person has a job which is heavy for him, how can it help on the spiritual path? Are some jobs better than others?

Paramahamsaji: Any job or work which is heavy for you is good for your mind. The work which we do in our daily lives has many purposes. One purpose is material; it gives you money to live. The second purpose is to give proper engagement to your mind. The work improves the growth of your mind. Therefore, no work is superior and no work is inferior. If you feel your work is very heavy for you, it is your mind's opinion. If the work meets with your material requirements, you must continue, no matter how heavy it is. But if your work is not according to your temperament, you must continue that and side by side you must continue your hobbies also. There are many people who work as typists but they like to paint, so they should paint a little also.

Q. Does the spirit become incarnated during the moment of conception or during the moment of birth?

Paramahamsaji: When the sperm and ova meet, a body is created. In the third month, a separate life enters into the body. In the fourth month the spirit enters into it.

Q. What is mantra and what is its purpose?

Paramahamsaji: Mantra is a sound formula and it has waves, it has a frequency, it influences the body, mind and atmosphere. If it is properly practised, it can create great force. A mantra can attain any frequency and when you produce it, it creates waves. These waves calm down your senses. When the senses are calmed, you can concentrate. Therefore, the purpose of mantra is to help you achieve concentration. When you practise mantra, the waves are generated in the form of energy and force. This force can purify your own self and it can also be transmitted. It has healing properties.

Q. This morning in the lecture on raja yoga you said that there are books on this subject which we may read. Could you indicate some authors of these books, besides Swamiji?

Paramahamsaji: There are many books on yoga and spiritual science written by enlightened people. One of the best books in my opinion is the *Bhagavad Gita*. This is a very important text for all householders. In this book, the way is shown as to how a householder, with his day to day duties, can realize the highest experience.

Then there is another set of literature on spiritual life known as the Upanishads. The Upanishads are dialogues between guru and disciple on the Absolute. Free and frank discussions are held on this subject. Therefore, one has to study these books and get the right inspiration.

In recent times, two persons have contributed immensely to spiritual literature; one is Swami Vivekananda and the other is Swami Sivananda. They



have given eloquent expressions to spiritual life. Swami Sivananda has touched the practical side of spiritual life.



Q. I recorded a yoga nidra lesson from a book, and while I was replaying it to practise yoga nidra, I heard many voices of men and women. What was it?

Paramahamsaji: I have heard this tape myself. A lady was reading yoga nidra instructions from the book and recording it. When she played it again, these sounds were heard. Now, this is very important for everybody to understand.

Sometimes we transcend this mind. When we transcend the mind, many spirits work through us, many people work through us. Sometimes we become soft mediums and sometimes we become sensitive mediums. When your mind is gross, you are a bad conductor. When your mind is soft, you become a good conductor. You know what a good conductor and a bad conductor is. If you put an electric line in wood it will not be conducted. Copper is a good conductor. If the wood is wet, it is also a conductor. When you become soft, then you conduct the invisible spirits. These invisible spirits are benign. Those who have a pure mind become the medium of benevolent spirits. When I become soft and I am talking about myself, I become the medium of my guru. This lady must have been soft at that time. Soft means astral. When you become innocent, you are soft. When you become like a child, you are soft. At that time, your gross voice is eliminated.

There is another important point which we have to understand and it is very surprising. This universe, this earth is full of other creations. There are things beyond what we can see. There are sounds beyond the sounds we can hear. But if you can tune yourself properly, you can see those men and women; you can hear those sounds. You can get in touch with them. It happens. I have moved around the world for the last thirty years and I have been to many places all over the world. But there are certain

places where I have been and I don't remember at all. Because at that time, I was a medium. I talk about many things to people many times, but I don't know it because at that time someone else is speaking through me. There are higher powers. There are invisible powers. There are many sounds. There are beautiful things around us. It is because we are extroverted that we cannot experience them. If you withdraw your mind or something happens to you, these things begin to occur. Not only a tape recorder, but a camera can take photographs of these. If you take my photograph and develop it later, you may find somebody else. This can happen. But these are the mysterious things of nature, and one has to go deep into them to understand. We have always been taught, "This is real." We have not been taught that there is something more real than this.

Q. Could you explain the tantric philosophy and the differences between that and the Vedic philosophy?

Paramahamsaji: Tantric philosophy is basically dualistic; the vedantic philosophy is monistic. That is the basic difference. Tantric philosophy does not believe in controlling the mind. It believes in the indirect methods of dealing with the mind. In tantric philosophy there is no puritanism. In vedantic philosophy, the practices are intellectual. Therefore, one who has not purified his mind cannot experience the truth of Vedanta. The vedantic philosophy is the highest philosophy and it is necessary to have the proper frame of mind to experience that.

We live in a world of duality and we see duality everywhere. In Vedanta there is no duality. How can you experience the non-dualistic truth with the dualistic mind? It is very good to say that all of us are one, but we don't feel it. Therefore, first we must practise tantric philosophy, purify the mind, and then practise Vedanta.



Concentrate the mind and then you will experience the vedantic philosophy.

Q. Some people say that by practising emptying of the brain, you can damage it. Is it true?

Paramahamsaji: The mind can never become empty. It will always be aware of something. Therefore, it is necessary that one must have a symbol or a form to concentrate upon. We should not try to empty the mind because it causes tension. We should try to concentrate on a form. We should try to concentrate on an object and when the mind becomes calm and quiet, we can see that object within us.

Q. How can we neutralize the negative transmissions of planets with mantras and talismans? How much does astrology influence our evolution?

Paramahamsaji: This is of course not a question on yoga, but still I will deal with it. The planets are outside and the planets are also inside. Everybody knows it, it is not my concept. In this physical body you have a miniature

universe. Therefore, by mantra, you can create an influence. Mantras have vibrations. These vibrations can be sent to those positions, centres, in the body. Just as radio waves can reach from Rome to different parts of Italy or any part of the earth, in the same way mantra waves can reach any part of the body. Therefore, mantra and talismans have a definite science. The whole universe is in you. This body is a miniature universe. This is not a philosophy, it is science and truth. Of course, this is not a subject of yoga. Therefore, I am just touching it.

Q. Once we have acquired the knowledge of our true self, our true essence, how can we acquire the consciousness of its eternity? And in what way is eternity reconcilable with individuality and how is this related to reincarnation?

Paramahamsaji: Eternity and individuality are not two different things. Individuality is one stage of manifestation. In a generating station you generate electricity and that electricity manifests itself in many forms. Is this light, electricity? Yes and no. It is a manifestation of that energy. In the same way, individuality is a manifestation of eternity. When you experience eternity in samadhi, then you experience totality. But you again come down to the world of individuality. As long as you have karma, you will come down because every individual has a destiny and obligations to fulfil. You have desires, you have passions, you have karma. Even if you experience eternity, you will come down to fulfil those obligations. It happens to everybody and therefore all the liberated people come down. They come down to the level of individuality, and they live among us as evolved souls. But when all karmas are finished and your obligations are over, then you don't return. That is called moksha, that is called nirvana, that is called liberation.



Every flower has honey, but if you want honey on your toast, what will you do? Take a flower? No, you don't do that. You take honey from the bottle. That honey has been collected by the honeybees from the same flower.

Incarnation and re-incarnation will always take place. The cycle will end only with moksha. If you take a flower seed and sow it, it will grow into a plant. There will be more flowers on it. Those flowers will create seeds, again they will grow and the cycle will continue. So, what do you do? Take the seeds, fry them and then you sow them. They won't grow. Re-incarnation comes to an end when there is no karma. Every desire is like a seed, every thought is potential, every attachment is powerful. That brings us back again and again. Every day you go back to your shop, every day you go back to your work. Why? Because you have obligations. If you have no obligations, you won't go back. An individual will incarnate again and again as long as he has obligations.

Q. I have heard that all of us have a spiritual guide. I am confused. Can you tell me who is my spiritual guide.

Paramahamsaji: Every flower has honey, but if you want honey on your toast, what will you do? Take a flower? No, you don't do that. You take honey from the bottle. That honey has been collected by the honeybees from the same flower.

In the same way, everyone has a guru inside. But you can't use him. You can't hear him. You know he is there, but you can't feel him. His language is not this language. He doesn't speak Italian, he doesn't speak Hindi, he doesn't speak English. The language of that guru is beyond our language. Now, suppose your guru is talking to you, will you understand him? To do this you have to first find another guru who speaks your ideas, who you can understand. When you are in communication with this guru, then you can awaken that inner guru. The external guru is the detonator of the internal guru. Do you know what a detonator is? The bomb is inside and the detonator is outside. The inner guru is to be exploded with the help of the outer guru.

The inner guru which is in us is known as sadguru, and this sadguru is the highest force in everybody. He is the light of the divine in you. By means of the outer guru, you should approach the inner guru. From the inner guru, when you have realized him, you approach the higher God or divine being. This is the approach that you have to take. Do not be confused in idealism. Practise reality. Many times this question is asked. Many people say the same thing, the guru is within, and I agree. But when people say that an external guru is not necessary, then I don't agree. There are a few people in this world who don't need an external guru because they are evolved souls. Even the divine incarnations who came down upon this earth had gurus. Even the strongest saints and seers had gurus; even the great people who had a lot of wisdom, who had a lot of power had gurus. When there is a lot of egoism in man, then he says he doesn't want a guru. Then his egoism is his guru. Therefore, to be free from the ego, it is safe to have a guru.

Practise devotion on him, practise faith in him, practise innocence in him, become a child before him. Then you will grow, and after you have grown you can hear the voice of your inner guru. When you can hear the voice of your inner guru, then follow him. When the inner guru guides you, there is no doubt, you are so sure. Many people come to me and say they have heard the inner guru and ask me if they were right. I tell them, he was not your inner guru, he was your mind. A person who has developed and awakened his inner guru has no doubt at all. The inner guru is an authority. If you ask the Information Department of Railways what time does the train leave for Milan and he says 7.30, will you believe him or not? You will believe because he is an authority. If you have doubt, that means that he is not an authority. Inner guru is an authority and when he wakes up, you have knowledge, you have jnana.

Impressions...

Reality of guru

Swami Chidprakash Saraswati

I met Swami Satyananda only a few times in my life, about four times, but they seemed much more to me. In spite of these few times, I can say in all sincerity that the inner relationship with him was really very intense for me. Telling about my experience with the guru leads me to two conflicting emotions.

On the one hand, as I begin to write, I realize that in order to convey my actual experience to those who read, I should write and write . . . in my mind, rivers of words and situations are flowing. I could talk for hours and hours . . . On the other hand, I know I do not have the time or the space to do this and my soul tells me, "What do you have to tell? What do you say? It's a private matter, they are personal things . . . there is nothing to tell . . . I don't want to say anything!"

However, although I am one of the thousands of disciples of Swami Satyananda and officially I've had his darshan only a few times in my life, Paramahamsaji's influence on me and my personality has been enormous. Equally enormous were their effects on my life, much more than I've really been aware of.

After each meeting with Paramahamsaji, my life, in the months and years that followed, have always had a deep positive transformation at all levels: practical, psychological and spiritual.

Of course, this wasn't always easy and I didn't always understand what really happened. Sometimes I had to

endure great pain and frustration, but this was not due to the guru, but due to the 'programs' of my mind which were uprooted and replaced, while awareness was growing more and more within me.

The experiences that I had after each meeting with Paramahamsaji were always very strong and they were directly linked to the guru; what I'm talking about is not fantasy but real experiences: physical, mental, psychological and spiritual experiences that profoundly changed my approach to life, my interaction with it. I can say without doubt that most of the knowledge that my little mind can handle now is not due to books, but to the experience – as a direct consequence of the connection with guru.

People say so many things about guru, many things are written, we can read many things about guru, Self, or about the guru-disciple relationship. However, in the mundane reality of everyday life, the majority of human beings are weak. We think that we know so much, that we are able to understand so many things, but often all this is superficial, it is just rational speculation. If just slight changes happen in our daily life, some problem about emotional situations or something else, we completely forget everything we believed in, everything we read or listened to. Thus, our knowledge becomes unnecessary and irrelevant in solving the real problems of our life.

The mechanisms of life are always the same: we would like to have this and that and if we can't get it, we begin crying and cursing and we forget everything. The whole knowledge is taken up by a fight, by an emotional turmoil or by slight or serious health problems. We say and hear so many things about masters and gurus, but

the perception of most of us affects only the superficial part of our personality; most of those things look like legends, stories, ideas and we believe they are used as symbols to help people to dedicate themselves to practice. We are always inclined to look for a rational explanation and all these things, they say, are not rational.

Personally I can say it wasn't this way in my life. I've had severe experiences, often daily. Sometimes feelings of deep joy arose in me and at some other times the experiences were cruel, but they were always liberating, true, complete, real, acting at every level, even the cellular one! When you are hungry, then you eat. When you experience something, then you cannot say that experience is not real, that it is a story or fantasy, and so it was with my experience with Paramahamsa Satyananda: a real experience.

All these things happened very slowly, year after year, and only long after I started to become aware of the connection existing between me and my guru. It still exists, and especially now, after his Mahasamadhi, I have really understood how powerful it was and how this connection is present in a large part of my everyday actions, much more than I can imagine. Now I know that this connection has always existed and always will. Saying this, I don't want to make an astonishing declaration, I'm not talking about something extraordinarily striking, I'm just taking a picture of my experience, just like I've been living it.

Life led me to become a very busy man. Since a young age I always had a lot of things to do and when I became a disciple of Paramahamsaji, in 1986, this disposition didn't change. I can't say that formally I



had some special relationship with Paramahamsaji. I could not visit the ashram in India many times. I spent my life trying to manage or resolve problems and a lot of everyday situations most of the time. But Paramahamsaji was there, always in my mind and in my thoughts. When Paramahamsaji moved to Rikhia, I always knew he wanted to be left alone and I respected his will; the guru was present and I was one of his thousands of disciples, or I should say, this was my rational perception at that time . . . but actually, it was not that way.

With Paramahamsaji's Mahasamadhi, I had experiences, real signs, not only on my own, but I saw those similar experiences lived by other disciples, or even by people who had just some kind of a connection with him.

It's not easy to explain the experiences I had since I became a disciple of Paramahamsaji because some of these are very personal and others, although the meetings were brief and few, would take a long time and space to describe. Although I was never particularly close to the 'dhoti' of my guru, although I am one of his thousands of disciples, I can say this: everything that is told or read about Swami Satyananda is true. I can say it's the plain truth because I experienced it on myself!

It's true that there's a deep connection between guru and disciple even if he is physically far away; it's true that the guru is immersed in divinity; it's true your problems are over if you receive the guru's grace; everything the guru says is true and everything Paramahamsaji has said is reality.

I don't say this because I always believed. I never believed in anyone. I can't believe that whatever I'm

told is true if I can't test it. Now I can say that many things that are said are true, and I'm grateful to Paramahamsaji for that. I thank him so much.

Another basic experience I've had is the realization that we are not 'us', but we're part of something bigger (of course this is common knowledge, stated and restated). We are just actors, often unaware, or servants. I'm part of a plan before I was born on this earth, just like everyone else. Swami Sivanandaji is still here with us. He's behind the actions of Swami Satyananda, Swami Niranjan, Swami Satsangi, and we are nothing but holders of this mission. We are a 'peaceful army', and the more our mind is empty, the more it can be filled by guru's command. Guru's command is divinity's command and it's always in agreement with our true nature...



Simple and challenging words

Sn. Trigunananda

I have been several times, I don't remember how many, to Rikhia – the ashram where Swami Satyananda spent the last part of his life in a meditation retreat. During the years, I went to this place from Munger, I stayed there to attend the Teacher Training Courses or the Sannyasa Training Course. At other times I came directly from Italy with the hope, rather than the aim, to again meet this great guru.

During the last few years, Swami Satyananda showed himself very seldom, but I have always been lucky: every time I came back to Rikhia, the privilege of receiving Paramahamsaji's darshan has been granted to me. And every time I have been admitted into his presence, he appeared to me, this is the extraordinary fact, in different clothes. I can't say if this fact was derived from my perception or from the way he was presenting himself. The point is that I found myself in front of the same person every time, but in such different appearances that sometimes they seemed nearly contradictory. In his person I could see the wise sympathetic old man who understands and encourages. The severe strict teacher who reproaches in a rough way the person standing in front of him, even before he can say a word. I have seen in Swami Satyananda the indomitable, proud conqueror of souls. I admired him while casting at a disciple a caressing gaze, like a tender grandfather at the son of his son.

I have seen the flash of lightning of his eyes shortly after he finished the panchagni sadhana and, at that time, I was suddenly obliged to lower my eyes so as

not to be blinded by that thunderbolt. Sometimes from his lips words as sweet as honey reached my ears. Sometimes his voice thundered so strong that it scared me. Always, however, his words have reached the most secret recess of my heart.

The last time I had the honour to see him, addressing numerous groups of Indian and western people, he said

some words of an upsetting strength and simplicity at the same time: "When you build a house, do not build it for you only, build it for others; every time you cook, do not cook for you only, cook for others." Very simple words, yet challenging to translate into actions. They are the last words I heard from him. Like a legacy. I won't forget them.



Letting yourself go

Sn. Virananda

When I think about the circumstances that led me to meet Swami Satyananda, I can't avoid thinking about Ishwara pranidhana, surrendering to God, without which nothing can be accomplished.

At that time I was living in Mantova and I was following an exoteric master who taught me a lot about swara yoga. I was also following the teachings of the Italian Yoga Federation as far as hatha yoga was concerned and I had been introduced into teaching yoga by my teacher following the old method that did not consider any training courses, but faith in your master.



Due to my professional commitments in 1978, I was about to move to Naples. I asked my master to suggest a valid yoga text and he said to get in contact with Bihar School of Yoga in Munger and buy *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*. Swami Anandananda, my first contact, brought it to me from India.

I was a member of the Italian Yoga Federation and on the occasion of their tenth anniversary, Swami Satyananda was invited to Italy, and if I'm not mistaken it was 1984.

I managed to have a private darshan with him; both my wife and I had many questions to ask but, as it often happens in the presence of great people, all our questions seemed totally stupid. He did not impress us very much, but his glance went deep into me, as well

as his words, and since then my thought was fixed on him.

I started questioning Swami Anandananda, to whom I will always be grateful for his patience, and I started to read eagerly all the possible Bihar School of Yoga publications. In 1985, on the occasion of Guru Purnima and the inauguration of the Greek ashram in the presence of Paramahamsaji, I went to Athens where I asked for karma sannyasa diksha, overcoming all my doubts due to my Catholic education and professional background. Surrounded by his disciples and devotees I came to know a different Satyananda, not so much as a master, but more like a father of many children who are looking for his words and advice.

In 1986, I found the courage and went to the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger for a month to attend some courses. I was very lucky that time because during that month, Paramahamsaji was in the ashram and I had the opportunity to take part in his satsangs. I felt very much involved with his voice and his presence. I had the chance to speak to him, listen to his suggestions and I experienced his kindness and also his steadiness and strictness. My opinion about Paramahamsaji changed again: strict master, severe father and keen friend.

I think that everyone ought to meet such a person. I met him and loved him, and since that moment I dedicated my life to spread the yoga taught by him, in whatever way possible for me. Family and professional commitments kept me away from him till 2008. I saw him at Rikhia again, a little older but always extremely present. I had planned to meet him again this year, but faith decided differently.

Hari Om Swamiji, you will always be in my heart and in my mind.



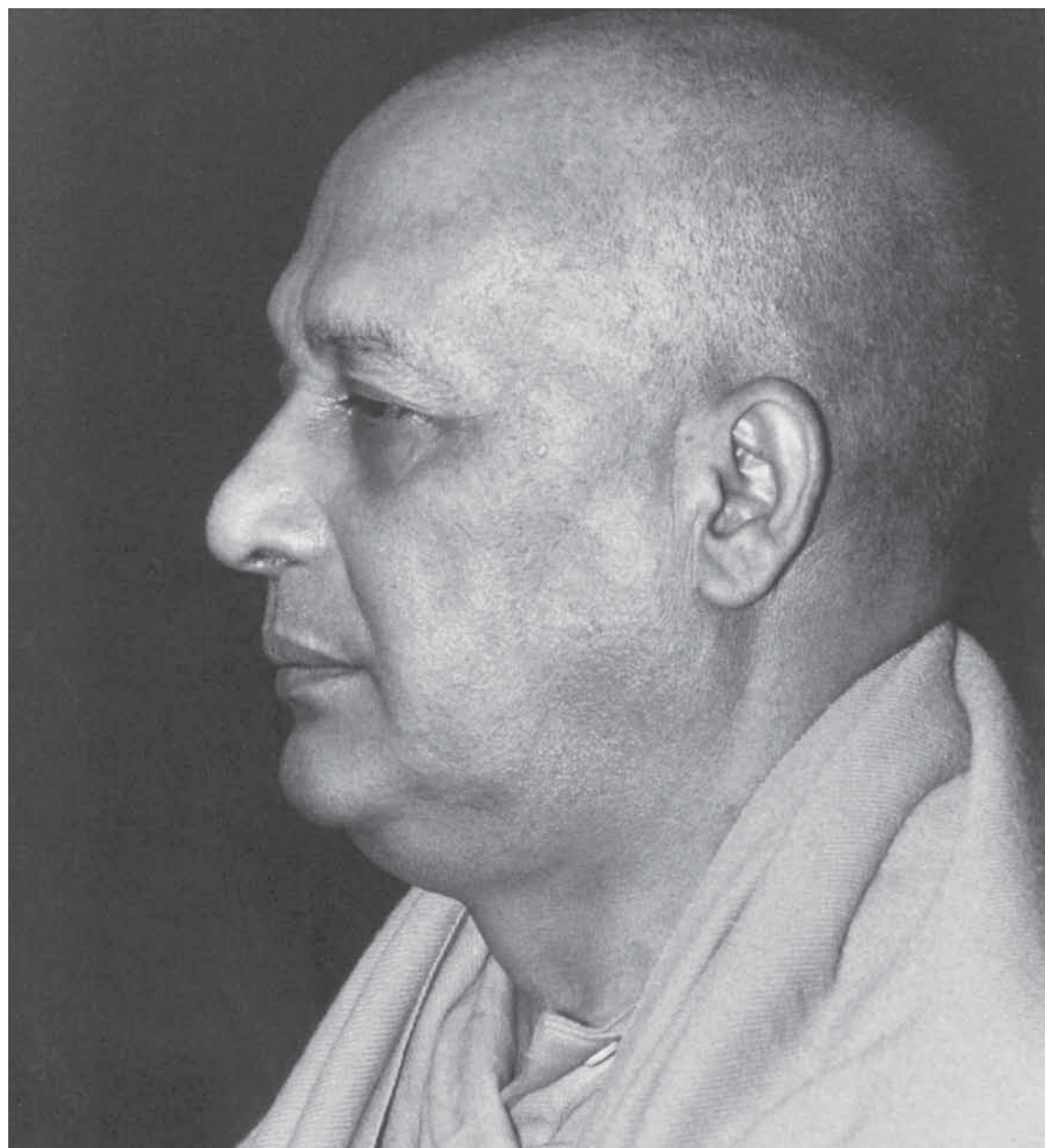
1984

In May 1984, Paramahamsaji arrived at Rome to preside over a yoga seminar organized by the Italian Yoga Federation. At the airport, he was welcomed by a delegation of members of the federation and other disciples.

The following day, Paramahamsaji travelled by car to Ciocco, a famous hotel in the beautiful hills of Tuscany. Each day of the program, Paramahamsaji delivered lectures on topics that were never before exposed to Italian aspirants and yoga teachers. These included 'Yoga and stress Management', 'Kriya Yoga', 'Maithuna' and 'Prana Vidya'. During the program, Paramahamsaji was interviewed by an Italian reporter for a major newspaper and magazine.

The following day, Paramahamsaji travelled by car to Venice where he gave a public lecture to the RYE teachers and a seminar was held at Hotel Michelangelo in Mestre.

In Venice, Paramahamsaji was accompanied on a boat tour by Swami Satsangi, Swami Anandananda and Swami Shaktidhara. After a day in Venice, Paramahamsaji left Italy.



Stress and the Modern Man

Il Ciocco, May 1984

Hari Om Tat Sat

Today, stress is being considered one of the prime causes of disease. A great deal of research has been done on this subject by scientists throughout the world and they have concluded that tensions, anxieties and disturbed mental conditions can cause serious physical ailments.

There is a very long list of diseases, such as blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases and asthma, which are known as stress-born diseases. If you study this list, you will conclude that 89 percent of the ailments today are stress-born. Science today is beginning to relate psychological behaviour to these stress conditions. Therefore, it is very necessary to study what stress is and how it can affect various aspects of human life. In order to do this, we have to first understand the nature of stress and where it comes from.

One of the most important factors that can be concluded from our studies of the ancient yogic literature and modern scientific texts is that there is not one, but hundreds of causes that can create stress. For example, the Doomsday prophecies that are made, which are very pessimistic. Do they not cause stress? They may not consciously cause stress, but they do cause stress in the unconscious mind.

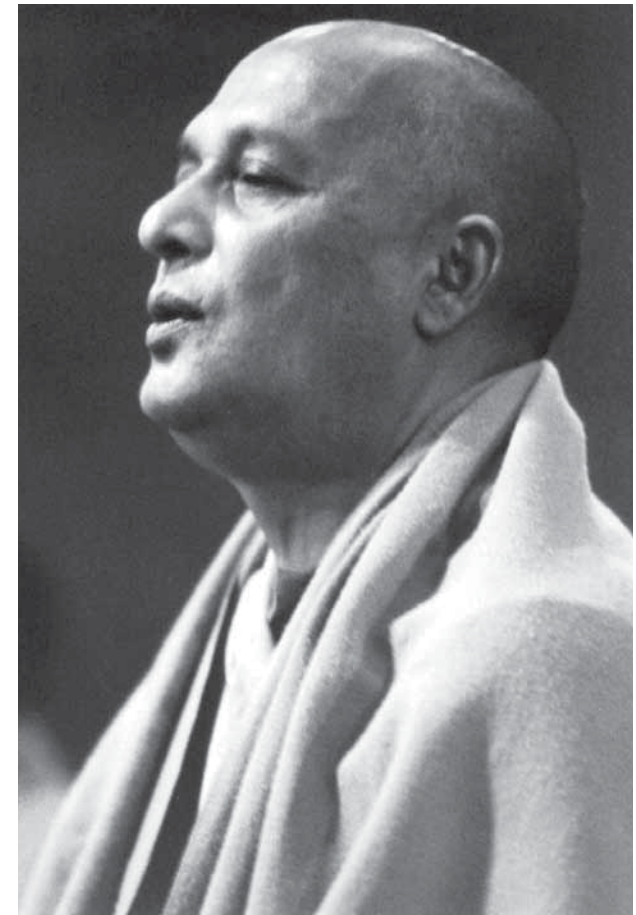
Psychology maintains that when you suppress your experiences, they recede into the unconscious and emerge in the form of nightmares. Whatever stress

you experience in your family, society or life can be accumulated in any part of your mind. Sometimes your stress is conscious, sometimes it is subconscious and many times it is unconscious.

The stress which affects the conscious mind is not very dangerous. The stress which is stored in your subconscious mind comes out in the form of dreams. But the stress which is unknown, the stress which you don't understand, goes into your unconscious mind and can create havoc in your body, mind, emotions and personality.

Stress, however is not a surprise condition of the mind; it comes through a particular mechanism. Stress arises out of tension. Tension is a condition of the nervous system, which travels to every atom and particle of the body. According to both yogic philosophy and modern psychology, there are three kinds of tension. They can be classified as muscular, mental and emotional tension. This threefold tension originates in our physical and mental structure and affects all other systems of the body. Some of you must have experienced that whenever you are under tension you make a lot of mistakes. This happens due to imbalance in the nervous system which causes erratic behaviour.

As tension ultimately culminates in stress, it is important at this point to understand these three kinds of tension. Muscular tension is caused by overdoing physical actions. The physical body has limited resources of energy and when we work exceedingly hard, this energy is diminished. We are then compelled to balance this decrease in energy by extra intake of food or medicine to accelerate or accentuate the energy required for overworking. For example, sportsmen require a great deal of energy to combat the strain of overusing their bodies. So they are given extra hormones and drugs in order to maintain a regular flow of energy in the body. However,



these physical or muscular tensions are not very serious or difficult to eliminate. With adequate rest and proper diet, they can eventually be worked out.

The next form of tension is called mental tension and most people in the world are suffering from it. We do not allow the mind to rest. The mind is always engaged in thoughts, and this over-thinking causes mental tension. Excessive thinking also leads to confusion in the mind which results in further tension. As a result, there is loss

of memory. If mental tensions become acute, one cannot make accurate judgements, thus causing many disasters in one's life.

It is a well known fact that the senses, mind, brain and nervous system are interconnected. The five senses are intimately connected to the brain and mind, as well as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Therefore, any perception and cognition that takes place in your mind involves the nervous system, the five senses and the brain.

Every process of thinking is responsible for producing some type of secretion or hormone in the body from the endocrinal system. When you think of fear, anger or any strong emotion, the adrenal glands begin to secrete potent hormones such as adrenalin. This is just one example. This is why thoughts should not be considered as mere psychological action. Every thought is psychological, but it also produces a physiological effect on the body. It can accelerate and excite the adrenal glands, it can create hyperactivity, it can cause an increase in the respiratory rate of the body, it can excite the kidneys and bladder. This is what scientists are saying and one may testify it from personal experience.

The third type of tension is emotional tension. Man is perhaps the only living creature that has known emotional tension. These emotional tensions arise from our relationships with people, objects and events. When we have a certain philosophy – and most human beings are philosophical – then we begin to relate ourselves to people, objects and events in life. These relationships develop on the basis of *raga* and *dwesha*, or likes and dislikes. For example, you do not relate yourself to a man just because he is a man. You relate to him because you either like or dislike him. Similarly, you relate with events or objects on the basis of your personal likes, dislikes and attachments.

As a human being, you are emotionally interacting with each and every thing around you. However, everything is not according to your wish. When something happens according to your wish, there is a positive emotional tension and when something happens against your wish, it creates a negative emotional tension. These emotional tensions can eventually cause peptic ulcers, asthma, heart attacks, or even mental insanity. They can make you a sinner or a saint. They can make you violent or they can transform you into a selfless servant of humanity. Emotional tension is a very powerful cause in human life and you must not underestimate it. So, these threefold tensions cause stress which eventually spreads throughout the body and mind, passing through physical, pranic and mental channels.

Now, let us study the body. According to hatha yoga, there are two forces in this physical body known as *ida* and *pingala*. They represent the sun and moon, *Shiva* and *Shakti*, or consciousness and life. These two channels flow throughout the body and in modern scientific terms they are known as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

According to yogic philosophy, *ida* carries the force responsible for thinking and mental action; *pingala* carries the force representing prana or vital action. These two forces are spread throughout the body, but the main channel flows within the spine intersecting at four main junctions or chakras. These chakras are spiral vortices of energy or prana. The first junction where they intersect is *swadhisthana* chakra which corresponds with the sacral plexus. The second is *manipura* chakra or the solar plexus, the third is *anahata* chakra or the cardiac plexus and the fourth is *vishuddhi* chakra or the cervical plexus. From these four junctions, thousands of channels carry prana and consciousness throughout each and every part of the body. In hatha yoga it is said that 72,000 channels carry

the pranic and mental force in the body. Modern science too speaks almost the same language.

Besides these four junctions, there is one point where these two forces of prana and consciousness originate and another point where they terminate. In hatha yoga the point of origin of these two forces is known as *mooladhara* chakra or the coccygeal plexus, and the terminating point is known as *ajna* chakra or the medulla oblongata in the brain. These two points where the two forces originate and terminate are most important for the awakening and sublimation of this energy.

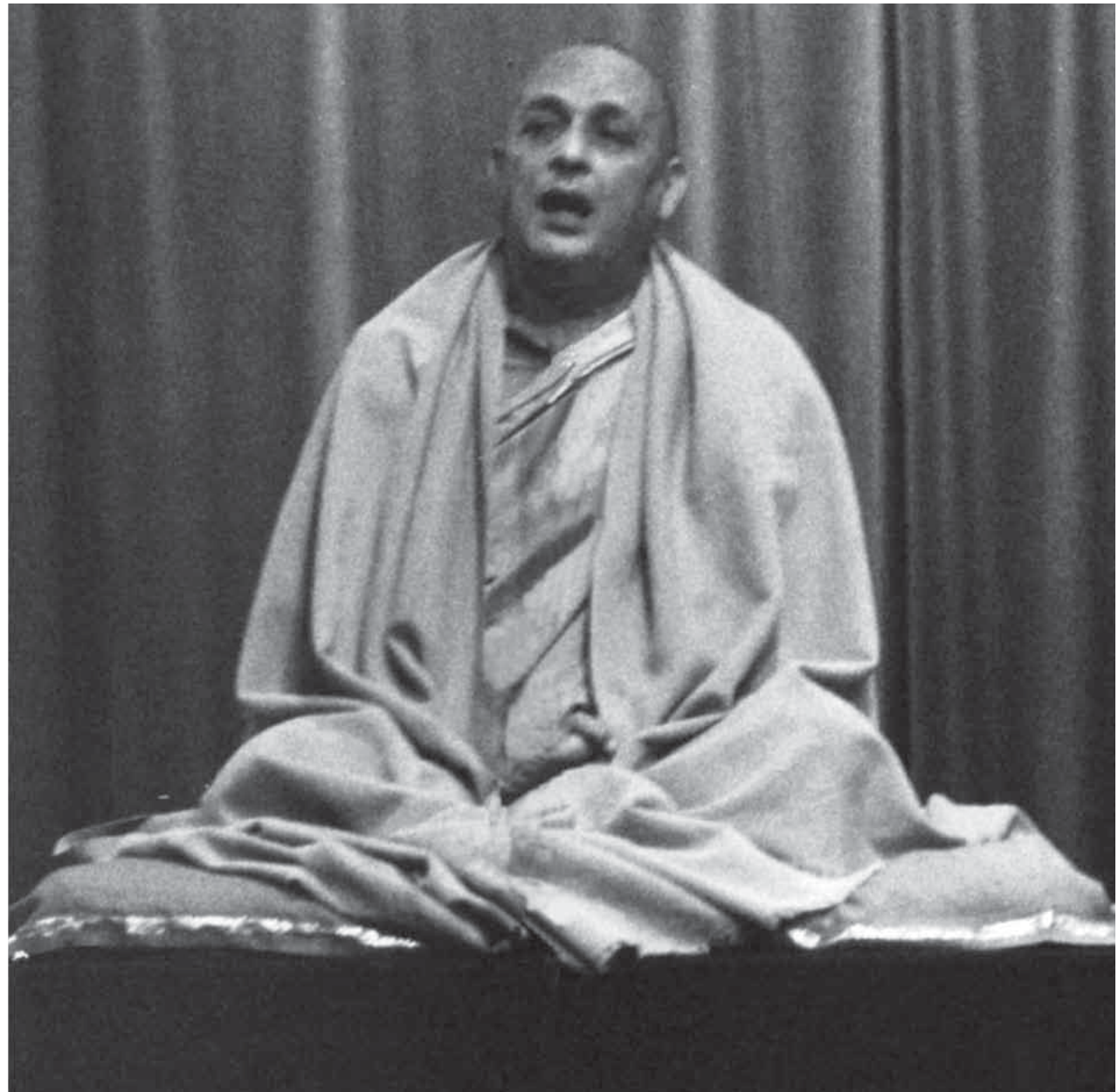
Hatha yoga claims that in order to create harmony and eliminate stress, these two forces are to be harmonized. It is when there is no harmony between these two forces that the problems begin. From the hatha yoga point of view, the cure for tension and stress is balance between these two forces. This balance can be created through the hatha yogic *kriyas* such as *asana*, *pranayama*, *trataka*, etc. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, which is an authoritative text on hatha yoga, it is said that the forces of the mind and prana, or *ida* and *pingala* are so intimately connected with each other that control of one spontaneously leads to control of the other. As prana can be controlled through the breath, hatha yogis utilize the practices of *pranayama* to induce a tranquil state of mind.

Whereas hatha yoga talks of control of prana, the system of *raja* yoga which is a more advanced yoga, advocates direct control of the forces of the mind. In the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali it is mentioned that the mind is governed by five kinds of *kleshas* or afflictions: ignorance, ego, attraction, aversion and attachment to life, which are responsible for all anxieties. If you reflect on this yourself, you will arrive at the same conclusion. The purpose or aim of *raja* yoga is to control the mind so that these *kleshas* are controlled.

The entire system of yoga and tantra deals with the elimination of stress, either as a byproduct of yogic practices or as a preliminary requisite for more advanced practices. Raja yoga says control the mind and thereby the pranas are controlled. This creates a balance between the two forces of ida and pingala. Hatha yoga says control the prana and thereby the mind is stilled. In tantra, however, there is a different approach altogether. Tantra says do not try to control the negative forces of the mind. Instead, it prescribes the practices of kriya yoga, ajapa japa, yoga nidra, etc., which induce a state of tranquillity in the practitioner without a direct confrontation with the mind. Out of these, the practice of yoga nidra stands out as a very powerful method for eliminating stress and tension in man.

A lot of research has already been done in the US and India on the effects of yoga nidra on the conditions of stress and tension. It has been found that during stress periods, the body secretes various types of hormones. These secretions belong to the intricate system of endocrine glands. As a result of the endocrine secretion, various changes take place in the body, resulting in stress, which in turn alters the characteristic patterns of the brain waves.

The brain has a definite pattern of energy frequencies which are known as waves: alpha, beta, delta and theta waves. Each and every brain wave has a direct effect on the body and particularly on the heart. It has been found that the endocrinal secretions can alter the respiratory rate, cardiac activity and other functions of the body. The body records different behaviours under the four different brain waves. For example, when delta waves predominate in the brain, the rate of respiration decreases and cardiovascular reactions such as the heart rate and blood pressure slow down, and the body is found to consume less oxygen.





Tantra says do not try to control the negative forces of the mind. Instead, it prescribes the practices of kriya yoga, ajapa japa, yoga nidra, etc., which induce a state of tranquillity in the practitioner without a direct confrontation with the mind. Out of these, the practice of yoga nidra stands out as a very powerful method for eliminating stress and tension in man.

Alternatively, when theta or beta waves are predominant in the brain, the body consumes a lot of oxygen. The heart and the cardiovascular system are under excitement and agitation. However, at the time when alpha waves predominate, there is a state of balance in the oxygen consumption by the body tissues. It is a state of physiological relaxation. Not only the consumption of oxygen, but the metabolic and respiratory rates are also stabilized. As a result of this, the blood pressure is lowered. When the blood pressure drops, there is a decrease of pressure on the heart and the work load on the heart is diminished. Therefore, the researchers have concluded that in order to decrease cardiovascular tension it is important that the patient should develop alpha waves in the brain.

I will give you another example. Suppose a robber sets out to commit a burglary. When he arrives at his target, his heart begins to palpitate and if his nerves are not strong, they give way. He begins to perspire and his mouth becomes dry. He feels the urge to go to the toilet and micturates frequently. If you have ever had the experience, you will understand. Now, this condition is created due to excitement in the adrenal glands on account of the stress and tension which he is under.

The practice of yoga nidra has been studied for a long time now. Twelve years ago, I worked with about one thousand heart patients. I was assisted by the Central Government of India and we conducted this experiment over a period of five years in one of the medical colleges. As part of their treatment, the cardiovascular patients in that college were taught yoga nidra. Regular reports of their reactions and progress were maintained and it was found that the practice of yoga nidra is very beneficial for heart patients.

The science of yoga nidra is very systematic. It is not necessary for me to talk about the practice at this moment

because most people are now aware of it, but quite often people mistake it for hypnosis. In 1968, I was conducting a yoga nidra class in Germany and a journalist published an article in the local newspaper that I was teaching hypnosis. Hypnosis is a different subject entirely. The word 'hypnotism' is derived from the Greek word *hypnos*, which means to sleep.

In yoga nidra there is no hypnosis and there is no sleeping. During the practice, you have to maintain the consciousness or inner awareness throughout. It has been found that in the state of yoga nidra the brain waves develop alpha patterns, which are considered very important in lowering the blood pressure and removing cardiovascular tension.

Elimination of tension, however, is not such a simple matter. There is yet another problem which has not been solved. Hidden deep within the recesses of the mind are the samskaras or archetypes which influence the emotions, personality and life of each and every individual. Your problems arise from this inner store of experiences. Happiness and unhappiness lie deep in you. These experiences are stored in the form of samskaras or archetypes. They exist within you in the form of particles. Do you understand what 'particle' means in modern physics? From particles they become waves of energy, and these waves become a force which later emerges as an experience. Your experience of happiness or unhappiness arises from the form of a wave that is born of one particle. That particle is known as samskara or archetype. There is another name for it: karma.

The samskaras or archetypes collectively form the karma of the individual. It is on account of them that your mind, emotions and personality are formed. If you suffer in life, it is on account of your deep-rooted karma; if you happen to enjoy life, it is also on account of your

karma. How are you going to deal with your karma? For karma cannot be dealt with by a rational process such as psychoanalysis or psychiatric treatment. It has to be understood as a subtle force underlying each and every action or event that you encounter.

It has been found that the practice of concentration on a symbol is effective in purging out these archetypes from the unconscious mind. In yoga this practice of concentration is known as *trataka*, and it should be done prior to the practice of *yoga nidra*. When you practise *trataka* on a symbol, you stimulate these particles or *samskaras* in the brain. There are hundreds of symbols prescribed in yoga and tantra, out of which some are considered more powerful than others. For example, concentration on a *yantra* or a *mandala* is very powerful depending on the quality of the *yantra* or *mandala* you choose for yourself.

Trataka done on the *Kali yantra* or *mandala* will bring out repressions more quickly, often in the form of nightmarish experiences. Concentration on different *yantras* and *mandalas* each brings out a different quality and quantity of repression. These repressions can be experienced in the form of dreams or in the state of meditation, which means that you are flushing the whole thing out. Therefore, side by side with *yoga nidra*, concentration should be taught according to the quality and resistance of the aspirant. If he is weak, teach him concentration on a black dot or candle flame; but if you think he can handle these nightmares, teach him *trataka* on a *Kali yantra* or *mandala*.

In ancient Greece and Egypt they had several different *mandalas*, but they have long been forgotten, for the West has turned its back on them. This is because they were wrongly misinterpreted as forms of gods and goddesses, instead of being related to human consciousness and psychology. If the conditions of



stress and tensions are to be eliminated systematically and scientifically, then these ancient *mandalas* will have to be revived and utilized as a treatment for the deep-rooted ailments of the human mind.

In the final analysis, we have to understand that the cause of stress can be related to several factors, some

external, others purely internal. But whatever the cause, yoga has given us an answer by showing us an effective way to eliminate stress, not through drugs or psychoanalysis, but through a profound and accurate understanding of the human body and mind.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Kriya Yoga

Il Ciocco, May 1984

Hari Om Tat Sat

Tantric philosophy is codified in sixty-four text books. Some of these texts are quite large and some are very small. They talk mostly about the hidden powers in man; they teach how to develop willpower, heal sickness, perform hypnotism and mesmerism, but some of them are dedicated to spiritual topics. The accepted number of these tantras, as I said, is sixty-four, but in the last fifty years some Indian and western scholars have done a lot of research and say there are as many as one hundred and thirteen.

All these texts are not devoted to the spiritual progress of man. They talk about *siddhis*, minor psychic powers. Therefore, the tantric philosophy in general is not understood. However, an English gentleman, known all over the world by the name of Sir John Woodroffe did some research on tantra a few decades ago and wrote a number of original books on tantra. Translations are available; you can get these books in most of the important languages of the world.

In the tantric system, they accept one reality: that it is very difficult to control the mind. There are systems which talk about controlling the mind by the mind. For example, raja yoga. In the science of raja yoga, you practise pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi, all through the mind. But in tantra they accept two methods. They say that when the mind is restless, prana also becomes restless. Therefore, to control the mind and prana, you can use the same truth. Those who have a strong willpower can control prana by controlling their mind, but those who have no willpower and whose minds are very weak

and distracted, should control prana first and thereby the mind comes under control. This is everybody's everyday experience.

Some people find it very difficult to control the mind. They may practise any technique of raja yoga, but they find that they are not able to control their mind. When they force control of mind, they get a headache and feel heaviness, depression and lethargy. Many times people try very hard to concentrate and when they come out, they feel a lot of anger. Therefore, we have to find out how to handle the mind and how to handle prana.

You must remember one thing. Control of mind and control of prana do not go separately, but hand in hand. You will have to find out which one you can control easily. When mind and prana both come under control, then the awakening of kundalini begins and samadhi will express itself.

Tantra accepts the reality that most of us are weak. Religions do not understand this reality. Religions believe that everyone is strong and can practise the precepts of religion. Thus the problems of mind are your real problems. You can control the mind if you suppress it, but that disturbs the personality. If you don't control the mind and leave it to run wild, then you can't attain meditation. The question is, what to do?

When you practise mantra, you often try to suppress your mind. A thought comes in your mind and you don't want it, so you try to drive it away. This creates a big crack in your mind, for by this process you create an enmity in the mind. You want to control the mind, but the question is, who wants to control the mind? The mind is hating the mind, the mind is disliking the mind; therefore, you suffer from mental problems. This is why many people who practise concentration and control of mind have schizophrenic personalities. This schizophrenic

personality is created on account of the differences within the mind. Therefore, it is not really very safe to control the mind directly. The control of mind should take place by controlling prana. It is for this reason that the science or techniques of kriya yoga have been propounded in tantra.

The tantric philosophy is the oldest philosophy known to man. It is older than the Vedic philosophy. In these tantric texts you have certain practices known as kriya yoga. There are many hundred practices in kriya yoga, but all the practices are not important and need not be practised. Out of the hundreds of kriya yoga practices, I have compiled seventeen practices from the various tantric texts. For example, there is a voluminous text of tantra called *Maha Nirvana Tantra*, or 'Tantra of Great Liberation'. In this text they have indicated a few kriyas. One of them is maha mudra, another is maha bheda mudra, the third is vajroli kriya and the fourth is shambhavi mudra. From this and other texts I have compiled various practices.

The practice of siddhasana is considered the most important practice in tantra. It is said that through the practice of siddhasana you can control the energy and attain inner light. Therefore many kriya yoga practices are done in siddhasana. In the same way, in some of the tantric texts they have suggested vipareeta karani mudra for sublimation of the pranic energy in man. The pranic energy is released from the body in the form of *bindu*, semen. Thus it is necessary for a yogi to practise vipareeta karani mudra so he can sublimate or redirect this primal energy.

Vipareeta karani mudra is praised highly in every tantric text because they all say one thing. Shakti, energy, goes down; you raise it up. Everywhere it is said that the pranic energy is being wasted and should be channelized.

In some texts it is said that if you practise pranayama for one hour or even two, the mind automatically comes under control. In this case you do not have to wrestle with your mind. If you practise bhasrika pranayama for half an hour or ujjayi pranayama for one hour, the mind will automatically come to a point of quietude.

It is not only in the tantric texts that you find these kriyas. They are indicated even in the Bible. The Bible says that there is a ladder from earth to heaven. Half the way you climb with the eyes open and half the way you climb with the eyes closed. References to kriya yoga can be found in almost all the ancient scriptures of mankind, such as the Bible, the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, but if you are not able to find them, then you should read my book on kriya yoga. I have published a voluminous book of about two thousand pages on kriya yoga.

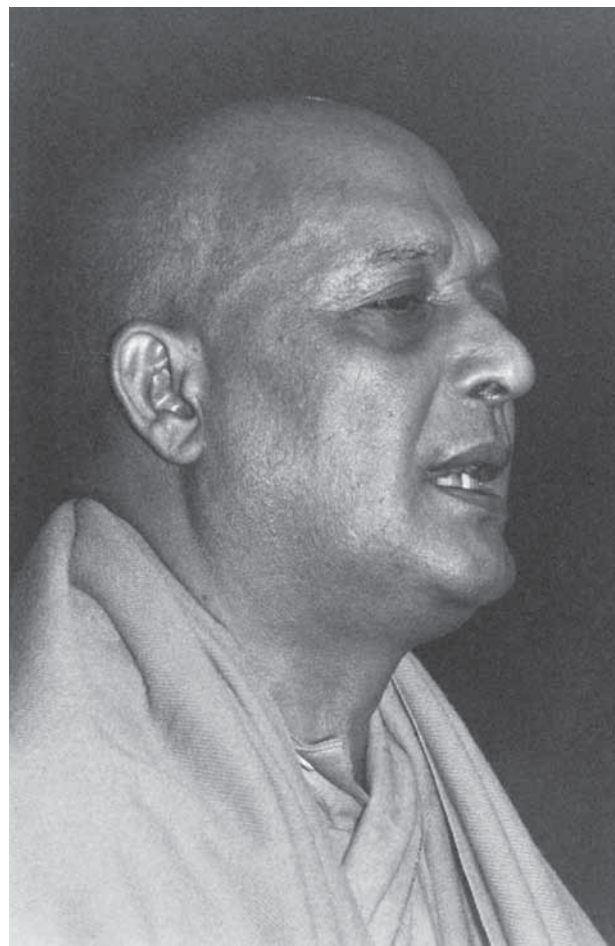
Even before Christ was born, the Essenes sect in the East knew about kriya yoga. Some years ago, western scholars found some scrolls in the Dead Sea, and these came to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. I have read several reviews about them. These kriyas were very well known to these ancient people. If you practise these kriyas, you do not have to fight with your mind. What is the purpose of practising kriya yoga? There is only one objective, to awaken the kundalini.

The seventeen kriyas of kriya yoga are independent in themselves. You can practise one or two or all of them. It is not important that you practise all seventeen, but some of them are very important. For example, maha mudra and maha bheda mudra. If you are not able to practise all the kriyas, but just practise maha mudra and maha bheda mudra, you can get the same result as from all the kriyas.

In the tantric texts, maha mudra and maha bheda mudra are supposed to be practised in siddhasana, but I found that many people cannot perform siddhasana. Therefore,

I decided to teach this practice in paschimottanasana. In fact, these two mudras are also a part of hatha yoga. You can find the references in your hatha yoga books.

There is a third important kriya which I want to indicate. It is known in tantra as naumukhi mudra, which means the mudra of the nine gates: two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, mouth, the excretory and urinary passages. Through this mudra you plug all these nine gates. There is a similar



mudra in hatha yoga. Perhaps you know it as shanmukhi mudra or some call it yoga mudra, in which you plug two ears, two eyes, nose and mouth. This is a very preliminary practice, but in naumukhi mudra you plug all the seven gates and also the urinary and excretory passages by the practice of moola bandha and vajroli kriya.

When all the nine gates are plugged, you can awaken the kundalini which resides in mooladhara and moves upwards through sushumna to the higher centres in the brain. If you have any difficulty in understanding what I am saying about this kriya, refer to your books on hatha yoga. The only difference between the hatha yoga shanmukhi mudra and the kriya yoga naumukhi mudra is that in kriya yoga you practise moola bandha and vajroli kriya and plug the excretory and urinary passages.

There is another important practice known as tadan kriya, which is practised in the lotus posture. While sitting in this posture, the buttocks are beaten against the ground. It is not very difficult to understand this practice because if you read any classical text on hatha yoga, you will find the technique. You can refer to your texts and learn from any teacher.

So, these are the most important practices of kriya yoga. In hatha yoga, you are taught them as preparatory practices. If you have practised hatha yoga properly, then you will be able to understand these kriyas and can practise them with an experienced teacher.

Now comes another important point, the chanting of *Om*. There are many ways of chanting *Om* in different practices. Sometimes you chant a long 'O' and a short 'M', which is what we usually do every day. In other practices the 'O' and 'M' are equal. But in kriya yoga the chanting of *Om* is done with the shortest 'O' and the longest 'M'. It is like 'Oommmmmmmmm'. The vibration of 'Mmmmmmm . . .' can be felt very easily in the spine.

There are many types of pranayama: nadi shodhana, bhasrika, kapalbhati, ujjayi, sheetali, sheetkari, bhramari, surya bheda, moorchha, etc. Out of all these, ujjayi pranayama is chosen for kriya yoga because it has been found that it is the easiest and safest. Bhasrika pranayama is faster and the results are quick, but at the same time the side effects are uncertain. When you practise bhasrika pranayama for half an hour with rapid speed, you can simply transcend the mind.

Bhasrika pranayama can be practised in a mild way, but it can also be practised in an intense way. All the pranas in the body begin to vibrate as if your body is experiencing a cyclone, and at the end of the pranayama, the mind is completely lost. It is doubtless a very powerful pranayama, but then as I said, the side effects are uncertain. Some can benefit no doubt, but others can have respiratory and nervous difficulties. This is not so with ujjayi pranayama. The effect is slow, but it is certain and safe.

With the help of ujjayi pranayama, you can span the whole distance of the spine from the top to the bottom and from the bottom to the top. You can feel that your breath is passing up and down through the centre of the spine. Ujjayi is a natural, unconscious way of breathing. Watch any healthy child while he is asleep, you will find he is breathing in ujjayi. When a healthy person sleeps, he breathes in ujjayi by contracting the throat. So, ujjayi breathing is supposed to be the most natural and spontaneous. Therefore, neither bhasrika nor nadi shodhana pranayama are indicated in kriya yoga.

When you practise ujjayi pranayama, you will find that after fifteen or twenty minutes, your mind begins to merge and you begin to see visions. In kriya yoga the process of seeing visions is postponed, that is to say, you are instructed not to see the visions up to a particular point because sometimes when your mind is okay, you get

them quickly and sometimes when your mind is not okay, you take time. Therefore, all the preliminary practices of kriya yoga are to be done with the eyes open.

One of the most important instructions in kriya yoga is: keep your eyes open, do not close them. Of course, you can wriggle from time to time, that does not matter. Up until the thirteenth kriya, you are not allowed to close your eyes. I used to feel tired too. My eyelids would droop and I would try and keep them open by force. In between the fourth and fifth kriyas, the urge to close the eyes and sit down quietly used to become so strong in me that I had to control myself because my guru had said, "Keep your eyes open!"

Most of the kriyas are done for three or four minutes each so there is no problem of discomfort in the posture. The fourth and fifth practices are really very difficult in the sense that you can't keep the eyes open. Half way with the eyes open you begin to see forms, lights and shadows. After the thirteenth practice you are asked to close your eyes. Ah, it is so comfortable! You have been waiting half an hour to close the eyes. Then you are asked to concentrate on all the chakras.

You concentrate on the chakras and on their contact. Bindu visarga has no contact point, nor does sahasrara chakra, but all the other chakras have a contact point. Ajna chakra has the mid-eyebrow centre; vishuddhi chakra has the throat; anahata chakra has the sternum; manipura chakra has the navel; swadhisthana chakra has the root of the abdominal viscera. It is not necessary to have a contact point for mooladhara chakra because when you contract and practise moola bandha, you are already in mooladhara chakra and at first concentration is done on this chakra.

It is not necessary for me to tell you about this kriya. You can read any classical text on hatha yoga. A lot has been written about this kriya in the *Hatha Yoga*

Pradipika, *Gherand Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga Ratnavali* and *Goraksha Samhita*. There is also a book called *Shat Chakra Nirupanam* which means 'Exposition of the Chakras'. It is a very old text. You can also find it in the appendix of Sir John Woodroffe's book on Shakti and Shakta. You should read *Shat Chakra Nirupanam* because it is important that you know about the chakras.

To concentrate on the chakras in an abstract way is very difficult, but if you know what the yantras, mandalas and bija mantras are, it is easier. The lotus for mooladhara, for example, has four petals, a Shivalingam with a three-and-a-half coiled kundalini serpent, four bija mantras – *yam, ram, lam, vam*, and a central bija mantra. The sound, the yantra and the mandala should all be brought into mind. It is not necessary to practise this until the end, but if you practise it in the beginning, later you can easily focus your mind on a particular chakra.

It is said in the hatha yoga texts that concentration on each individual chakra is very important. Why is it important? Although the accepted seat of kundalini is mooladhara chakra, each and every individual experiences the awakening of kundalini during the course of evolution. As a result of that, maybe your kundalini is not in mooladhara, although the traditional seat of kundalini is mooladhara. It is possible that your kundalini is in manipura, or it may be somewhere close to ajna chakra. You are concentrating only on mooladhara chakra, but Shakti is not there. Therefore, you must practise concentration on each and every chakra for a particular period of time. You can practise it in various ways. Make a mandala or yantra with the bija mantra. Read it carefully and understand it. Then close your eyes, practise moola bandha and imagine the mandala there.

When you practise moola bandha you are tackling mooladhara chakra. When you practise vajroli, you are

contacting swadhisthana chakra. When you practise uddiyana bandha you are contacting manipura. When you hold the breath, practise kumbhaka, you are contacting anahata chakra. When you practise jalandhara bandha, you are contacting vishuddhi chakra. When you practise shambhavi mudra or trataka on a particular point, you are contacting ajna chakra. A lot more is written about chakra awakening in the hatha yoga texts.

Paramahansa Yogananda of the Self-Realization Fellowship brought kriya yoga to the West. He brought kriya yoga to America, Europe and Latin America in particular and taught it to thousands of people. As a result, many people were benefited spiritually. After Paramahansa Yogananda, I came to the West with kriya yoga and made it much clearer, because when Paramahansa Yogananda came, the West was amateur. At that time people could not even sit cross-legged, not to talk of the lotus posture and siddhasana. People could not even sit on the floor and stretch their feet, but that is not the condition any more. Now the western people are very yoga-minded and very well prepared or, I would even say, advanced. They have been practising hatha yoga for so many years; therefore, I have brought the whole range of kriya yoga.

Now I will come to the point about how to learn kriya yoga. In European countries there are many teachers who teach kriya yoga and who we have been preparing for many years. I accept that it may be difficult for you to practise all of the kriyas, but please learn whichever one you find easiest. Out of the seventeen practices you can accept and practise at least one.

I will tell you the easiest practice which I teach. Sit in the lotus posture or siddhasana. Keep your eyes open and fixed. Do not move them. Start ujjayi pranayama very gently and fold your tongue backwards into khechari mudra. Go on breathing up and down the spine for five



to thirty minutes. You should feel that the whole thing is happening in the spine. Do not close your eyes and do not be too tight. You can look here and there if you like and you can scratch your body also. But continue with ujjayi breathing, eyes open, tongue folded. When you have

finished, close your eyes. Take your mind down to the bottom of your spine and imagine a small Shivalingam, an oval-shaped stone with a serpent coiled around it three-and-a-half times. You will see what happens.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Cosmic Potential in Sensual Experience

Il Ciocco, May 1984

Hari Om Tat Sat

In modern physics, there is a very wonderful concept of union. The famous physicist Itzak Bentov, a Czech-born physicist who settled in the United States, was an authority on physics and space technology. He has spoken

about this fact of union related to the whole universe. He said that when the two opposite poles of polarity, known as time and space, meet with each other in the nucleus, there is a union. As a result of that union, there is an explosion.

This is precisely the philosophy behind creation. Whenever two energies of opposite nature or polarities meet at one point, then creation takes place. In the philosophy of Vedanta, it is said that when the individual soul and the universal soul, *jiva* and *atma*, unite with each other, then an experience takes place. The system of hatha yoga talks about the union of ida and pingala nadis

in ajna chakra, as a result of which an experience in the form of light takes place.

In fact, if you study everything in the universe, from the unmanifest to the manifest, you will find that everywhere a process of unification is taking place between two opposite qualities. The tantrics say the union between the two opposite polarities, in the form of male and female, creates an experience that brings about an awakening. In physics, they call this process fusion. In tantra, the same process is known by the terminology of maithuna. Various other sciences have their own terminology, but the maithuna which the tantrics talk about should not be misunderstood as sex. It does not literally mean that.

Maithuna is a Sanskrit word developed from the term 'mithuna'. *Mithuna* means union of two opposite polarities. You can find this in atomic science. If you study the behaviour of oxygen atoms and hydrogen atoms, you will learn how these two make water, or H₂O. In the same way, in nuclear science you can find how the nuclear energy is exploded. We are able to understand all these processes, except when we talk about maithuna there is a misunderstanding.

The Hindu religion is the most ancient religion in the world. It has always propounded disciplined sexual behaviour. When a section of Hindus heard that tantric wise men were talking about maithuna as a way to higher spiritual experience, they were astounded. It was something they could not understand. However, they gave it another thought because the people who were talking about maithuna as a way to higher experience were not ordinary people; they were very important people of wisdom. Therefore, Hindu seekers came to accept this as a path of spiritual practice. And they have been able to maintain this tradition up to this day. The Celts had their own maithuna tradition, so did the Egyptians, the pre-



Hellenic cultures and others. The tribes of America and South America, such as the Hopis, Chibchas, Incas, Aztecs, all had this culture. However, with the invasion of foreign ideology and philosophy, everything was finished. It was only in India that they maintained the perennial tradition of tantra.

Hindus have a very peculiar habit which you might not know of. They have beliefs rooted in eternal dharma. They will not leave them at all, but if a new idea is given to them by wise people, they will accept that without rejecting the old ones. Therefore, this tantric tradition has been kept alive in India. However, it is believed to be intended only for the initiates. If the uninitiated are allowed to involve in this technology or science, there will be what is called moral anarchy. Therefore, we understand that there are two forms of dharma. One dharma is for the empirical purpose, to run the society, the family, a nation and a state. The second form of dharma is that which gives you a way for higher spiritual experiences.

Sometimes, these two forms of dharma come in conflict with each other. Therefore they say that only those who are properly initiated should accept the spiritual dharma of tantric science. If an ordinary person who is not initiated properly breaks the sexual discipline of society, Hindus will not accept it. But if a person who is properly initiated and who is a sincere aspirant practises tantric maithuna, they accept it in total.

In tantra there are three branches and they are distinct from each other. One branch is the vama marga, and it needs a little explanation. In the West, vama marga is translated as left hand tantra. This is not a correct translation. *Vama* means wife, because a female represents the ida polarity. The male represents the pingala polarity. Ida is on the left side of the body, therefore the wife always sits on the left. As she sits on the left, she is known as vama, and any action

or ritual, interaction or practice which involves her is called vama marga.

Before I talk to you about maithuna, I will make it very clear to you what vama marga means and what it does not. It is very important for us to know that men and women do not belong to the same polarity of energy. From external physical appearance, we do seem to be the same species of homo sapiens, but when we are to be defined in terms of energy, the male represents positive energy and the female represents negative energy. In fact, in every individual there are two forms of energy, ida and pingala, but you must also remember that man stands for pingala and prana shakti and woman represents ida and chitta shakti. In tantra, the man or masculine polarity is known as Shiva and the feminine polarity is known as Shakti.

Now, the union between these two polarities can be brought about by various methods. When these energies unite at one point, an explosion of energy takes place. In many books this experience of union has been described in poems. In the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is a verse (11:12):

If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once in the sky, that would be the splendour of that mighty Being.

This experience resembles the after-effect of the detonation of a nuclear bomb. It also resembles the experience of a yogi at the time of union between these two forces.

Where does this union take place? I'm talking about maithuna. This experience takes place in ajna chakra, but only when the energy flows to ajna chakra. A certain type of energy is conducted to ajna chakra through sushumna nadi, the third important nadi besides ida and pingala. I

hope you know that there are three main nadis, ten minor nadis and 72,000 other nadis.

Ida and pingala flow every one hour and twenty minutes. This particular science is called swara yoga. They do not flow together twenty-four hours. If they flowed twenty-four hours, it would mean that you are not well or you are going to fall sick. Besides these two, there is a third nadi called sushumna. Ida nadi carries the mental force, pingala nadi is the carrier of the pranic force and sushumna nadi is the carrier of spiritual force. Sushumna nadi is blocked most of the time. In most people, sushumna nadi does not function. As a result of this, one does not have any spiritual experience. Through the practices of hatha yoga, sushumna nadi is brought out of this blockage. Therefore, before embarking on the practice of maithuna, you must be sure that your sushumna nadi is already awakened. If it is not awakened, then maithuna is not maithuna, it is sex, because the experience is then the ordinary experience, which is a lower experience.

In fact, the actual union takes place in ajna chakra. If you ask me which is the exact centre of the maithuna experience, I will reply, ajna chakra. However, an experience is created at a lower point. This experience is not an experience of the awakening of kundalini because the kundalini cannot be awakened directly. You can't handle the kundalini directly. Therefore, through maithuna, an experience is to be created. And that experience has to be conducted through sushumna nadi to ajna chakra. As a result of this transference or transmission, the experience takes place in the higher centre and not in the lower centre.

When the experience takes place in the lower centre, you know what exactly it is. It ends in exhaustion, fatigue and depression, because the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous systems cannot hold this

energy. So, how can one have this experience in ajna chakra? There are a few practices in hatha yoga. One of the practices which conducts this energy to the higher centre is known as uddiyana bandha. Through this practice the energy is conducted upwards. Then, in order to experience this energy, you should practise shambhavi mudra, which brings you in touch with ajna chakra.

After this experience takes place in ajna chakra, there is a descent. First there is an ascent of the experience. Then there is an experience, and that experience again descends. It comes down through the sushumna passage and then the awakening of kundalini takes place. Those of you who have studied the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo will be able to understand me better. Sri Aurobindo was the greatest of yogis who lived at Pondicherry in South India. He spoke about the ascent and descent of divine energy. This is the exact process.

In our day to day life, we are not using this natural act properly. In fact, many people throughout the world consider it very bad. Of course, everybody indulges in it despite that, and as a result they have many mental problems. It is only lately that Dr Sigmund Freud gave a new definition of man's sexual act in relation to his physical/mental health and behaviour. In tantra, they say that this particular act has a threefold dimension of experience and action.

According to the quality of our evolution, we are either animals, human beings or divine beings. These threefold qualities which we represent depend on the qualities of sattwa, rajas and tamas. In tantra, they call the tamasic being a pashu, the rajasic being a veera and the sattwic being a deva. According to the quality of our evolution, the purpose of maithuna becomes different. *Pashu*, the animal, indulges in the act for procreation. Human beings, or the rajasic type of people, indulge in the act

for pleasure. The sattwic type of people, whose evolution has reached the sattwic height, practise it for the higher experience of samadhi. Therefore, maithuna has three dimensions. Everything depends on the quality of the individual. If this particular act, ritual or kriya is utilized for the awakening of kundalini, then it is necessary for us to improve the quality of our existence. In other words, we have to become sattwic. If you are not sattwic, then maithuna is only sex. If you are not sattwic and you are practising it for samadhi, still it is sex. Therefore, there is this prerequisite in the sadhana of maithuna.

We have to also understand that the act of maithuna can be practised even without interacting sexually, because in tantra there are two types of definitions, the literal and the esoteric. There are five elements in tantra called *pancha makara*, which are the five ingredients for tantric practices. Maithuna is only one ingredient; there are four other accompanying ingredients. The dual definition applies to all of them. In this context, maithuna need not even be sexual interaction, because both polarities exist within you. The right side represents Shiva and the left side represents Shakti. Pingala represents Shiva and ida represents Shakti. These two nadis flow in the framework of the spine and the union between ida, pingala and sushumna has to take place in ajna chakra. When this union takes place in ajna chakra, that is also known as maithuna in tantra.

Another of the five elements is *madya*, literally, wine. In the higher centre of the brain, there is a chakra known as bindu visarga. *Bindu* means a drop, point or centre and *bindu visarga* means the point from where the nectar drops. It is a lunar centre from where ambrosia or nectar drops. This bindu falls down and is absorbed by the body. When it is assimilated by the body, you have the same experience as that in deep meditation. In tantra they call it

amrita. This is madya, wine, the second element of pancha makara. It is not the wine you drink from a bottle, it is this wine. When the nectar flows into and is assimilated by the body, you feel very high. Therefore you must remember that tantra talks of a system of an act where union takes place at a deeper level.

Many times people come and ask me to teach them tantra, particularly maithuna, but you must remember that it is something very, very special and very, very important. The initiate has to be a hatha yogi and not only that, he has to regularize each and every aspect of his being.

In India, when marriage takes place, they match many aspects of both the boy and the girl. Just the union between male and female is not marriage because sometimes, the male and female can belong to the same polarity. Sometimes two men can belong to the same polarity. I am a man and he is also a man. We have different polarities, that is why he is my disciple and I am his guru. The relationship between guru and disciple takes place when there is an opposite polarity. Then only it will work, otherwise it won't.

In the same way, between man and woman or husband and wife, there must be opposite polarities, different polarities. Then only the marriage will work, otherwise it will not. At the time of marriage, they check the horoscopes to see which polarity the girl belongs to and which polarity the boy belongs to. In the same way, when men and women come into interaction through this tantric ritual, first they must be sure that they belong to different polarities. The husband and wife relationship is not enough. You may have been declared husband and wife by religion or ritual, but you may not be an ida and pingala combination, you may be plus-plus or minus-minus. That is not two polarities. Therefore, if this ritual

has to take place between husband and wife, they must be sure that they are like guru and disciple.

The act of devotion, faith, understanding and union takes place between the two at each and every level of their existence. However, there is a great difficulty and that is, how to overcome lust and passion. If you can't overcome lust and passion, then maithuna cannot take place because passion is something which we have inherited. Passion is something which belongs to the realm of instinct and not to the realm of intuition. We are attached to each other by body, beauty, etc., but that is not the consideration in the tantric relationship.

Many times in India I have seen husbands and wives where one partner is very ugly, but the union which they hold with each other throughout life is something which you can't understand. They don't look at each other's body and appearance. You will have to realize the soul, although for you this is a very difficult concept. You have to realize the spirit of the person, not how she sings or looks, and not how romantic or nice he is. Can you see the spirit of the person? If you can't, don't talk about maithuna. Keep yourself confined to Freudian, psychological sex. If you can't see the spirit, then you can't control passion. How to overcome passion was my subject. Ignore the body, ignore his or her external qualities. Go deep into the heart. Then go beyond the heart and emotion. Realize his or her spirit, self or atma. Then you will like your partner without passion. That is what the relationship between the guru and disciple is. We love each other, but there is no passion. That is the wonderful quality of a tantric yogi.

Therefore, before the act of maithuna, there are many important practices of maithuna that have to be followed. Meditation is one of them. Not abstract meditation, you must meditate on yantra and mandala. You must utilize the sound, the picture and the yantra, because these



geometrical yantras are symbols of the universal nature. The universe is not the way you see it. The sun is not the way you see it. The whole earth, the men and women, are not the way you see it. This is only appearance, it is not the reality.

What your symbol is, is exactly how you are. You can be explained in terms of a yantra. Yantras are geometrical,

concentric formations, in the form of triangles, spheres, etc. and they represent the universal symbol. The way you perceive a flower is just its appearance. There is another state of its existence and that is called mandala. Therefore, in tantric technology, they always talk about yantras. In fact, the yoni itself is a yantra. It is the inverted triangle. Faith, trust and sense of unity are represented



Kundalini resides in mooladhara chakra. The nucleus is in ajna chakra and the lingam and the yoni are the operating switches. They are instrumental; they are only tools and vehicles. However, this type of maithuna is not known today.

by two triangles intersecting each other in anahata chakra. One triangle represents Purusha and the other represents Prakriti. Prakriti is always represented by the inverted triangle and Purusha is represented by the upright triangle.

Thus, the act of maithuna, which is nature's creation, should be utilized for the awakening of kundalini. Practise hatha yoga, purify your body, practise pranayama, become an expert in kumbhaka or retention, rectify your diet and then concentrate on the mid-eyebrow centre in shambhavi mudra. After this, approach a guru. He will accept you; he will never say, "No, no, I don't know anything." He will say, "Okay." Then he will tell you more than I have spoken. The mantras which have to be uttered, the time and place, the environment. Then one of you can become a great yogi.

Kundalini resides in mooladhara chakra. The nucleus is in ajna chakra and the lingam and the yoni are the operating switches. They are instrumental; they are only tools and vehicles. However, this type of maithuna is not known today. You can practise maithuna in a very spiritual sense also, but that's very difficult. Nature has provided you with a way, and society has allowed you to live with a partner. Do not miss this opportunity. When a male and female live together, they should not miss this divine opportunity. They should not waste their time in fighting, quarrelling and separating from each other because they don't get anything from this.

The spirit of every man and every woman is pure and great. When this act is performed for a higher experience, it is a dharma, and when it is done like an animal, then it is a sin. I personally don't believe in sin, but there are religions that do, and to some extent I think they are right. When there is anarchy in sexual behaviour, then it is a sin because it destroys the body, the mind, the family and

society. Roman empires vanish, Egyptian empires vanish. It is a mistake.

Now that the western countries are trying to understand the role of sex in human life, I think tantra will help them a lot. It is a very vast subject, and in half an hour I can do no justice to it. There are many books and ancient texts in tantra and some of them have been already translated into western languages. You can study *Vijnana Bhairava Tantra*, *Maha Nirvana Tantra* and *Kali Tantra*. Many eastern and western scholars have written commentaries on these.

Hari Om Tat Sat



Prana Vidya

Il Ciocco, May 1984

Hari Om Tat Sat

Throughout the universe there is a great force which is known as life force. In yoga we call this force *prana*. If we analyze this great force, prana, then we come to a point of particle of energy. Even as you have particles of light and particles of atom, in the same way you have particles of prana. Prana, therefore, is manifest as well as unmanifest.

When there is no creation, then the pranas are in an unmanifest state, or when the whole creation is dissolved, the pranas go back to their own source. At that time, the pranas remain in the form of particles. Somehow, when these pranas in the universe begin to explode and manifest, they change into the form of waves. This happens with all forms of energy, including pranic energy. This prana which I'm talking about is the universal prana or the universal life force. But there are many objects, many living beings, many other things in the universe which comprise of the same life force. Therefore, prana has two dimensions: microcosmic prana and macrocosmic prana.

In the macrocosmos, prana is permeated throughout what we call a field, a unified field. This energy field can be called a universal life field or pranic field. 'Field' in modern science refers to a section or a dimension through which the energy flows. You have radioactive fields, electromagnetic fields and in the same way, there is a pranic field. Thus prana is not just the air you breathe in; what you breathe in every day is oxygen. This oxygen has positive and negative ions, and it can stimulate your pranic system.

In microcosmic bodies, that is, us, prana is present throughout the body. It is present in this physical body in the form of waves, and it is created, comes into being or is in you from the time the mother conceives you in her womb. Thus everybody is born with prana. It also means that we are born with a definite quantity of prana, according to the quality of the nature of father and mother. It is the inherent quality of every matter in this universe, including the semen and ova, to be pregnant with that life force. So, what is the structure of prana and what are its laws? They have not been properly defined by us, the yoga teachers, because most of us talk about prana in relation with the oxygen we breathe in, in the form of inspiration and expiration.

If you study the ancient yogic and the tantric literature, you come across two terminologies, prana and mahaprana, that is, life force and the great life force. In this physical body there are two centres for these two types of forces. The seed of prana is in manipura chakra and the seed of mahaprana is in mooladhara chakra. Some people are born with excess of pranic energy. Due to this they manifest some healing power, or healing capacity. They always radiate a quantity of magnetism and transmission from a particular part of their body. This fact has been endorsed and verified by many scientific observations made by Kirlian photography. Some people have a shrunken pranic field and some people have a very wide, very large pranic field. Therefore, you must also understand that prana is not only a life force, but it is a force whose quality is radiance.

Many years ago, a man called Mesmer used to attract people through his look; therefore, his practice came to be known as mesmerism. This gentleman must have been born with an excess of pranic energy, or he must have practised some yoga techniques, or he must have

been touched by some of the pre-Christian tantric rituals through which he must have improved his pranic energy.

Throughout the world we find thousands of people who have the capacity of healing others. In India, we have such helpers practically in every community. They can transfer their pranic energy through any part of the body. For thousands of years, such pranic healing has been continuing in every part of the world. However, there was a time when people of the western countries misunderstood it. They thought it was a kind of black magic and these healers were penalized, persecuted and sometimes even executed. In fact, many times the pranic healers themselves could not explain what was happening. They themselves believed that it was a magical power. They could not explain that prana is a force which can remove the disease elements in the physical body.

Just as when the body is freezing, you bring it in contact with fire and you get comfort, in the same way when the body is sick and you bring it in contact with the pranic force, it is healed. However, I'm not going to talk about how to heal others in this lecture. This was just an introduction about the importance of the pranic force. At the same time, it is very important for us to know that we are not individual or separate entities, but we are a part of the universal life force.

Now, let us analyze what yoga tells about prana. In order to understand this, let us revert to kundalini yoga. Kundalini yoga is a faculty or part of tantric technology. It tells that there are three nadis in the spine, which emanate from mooladhara chakra and terminate in ajna chakra. The word nadi needs a little explanation. Nadi means channel, but more correctly it means flow. Therefore, the meaning of the word *nadi* is flow of energy.

These three nadis are responsible for conducting three types of energy or forces in the physical body.

From mooladhara chakra, from the left side ida nadi and from the right side pingala nadi flow up. Both cross each other at four junctions in the body – at swadhisthana chakra, manipura chakra, anahata chakra and vishuddhi chakra. Ida nadi represents the negative force of energy and pingala nadi represents the positive force of energy. Pingala nadi is the conductor or carrier of pranic force.

Now, if you imagine how the pingala nadi flows within the framework of your spine, you will understand it better. It emanates from mooladhara chakra, flows towards right, makes a curve, crosses at swadhisthana, flows to the left, makes a curve, crosses in manipura and goes to the right, makes a curve, crosses in anahata, goes to the left, makes a curve, crosses in vishuddhi chakra, goes to the right, makes a curve and terminates in ajna chakra. In each chakra it passes through a junction, from where the pranic force is distributed to various centres in the physical body. Thus we have six distributing centres, which are connected with various organs in the body.

Mooladhara chakra is the distribution centre for the genito-urinary and ovarian centre, swadhisthana chakra distributes this energy to the kidneys, the bladder and urethra. From manipura chakra pranic energy is distributed to the large and small intestines, the duodenum and the pancreas. Manipura chakra therefore is the distributor for the whole digestive or gastric system. From the junction of anahata chakra, this pranic energy is supplied to the heart and the lungs, that is, the cardio-vascular system. From vishuddhi chakra, the pranic energy is distributed to ears, eyes, nose, throat and thorax. From ajna chakra, the energy is distributed to the higher centres in the brain. This is a very gross description of the system of distribution. The same system has been indicated by modern medical science. The order in the distributing system of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous

systems to each and every organ of the body is exactly the same as ida and pingala in kundalini yoga.

If you read the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Gherand Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga Ratnavali* or *Goraksha Samhita*, the four books which particularly talk about hatha yoga, then you will understand what I am telling better. There are many other important texts on hatha yoga, but these four are considered to be authentic.

In these books, as also in other texts of tantra, they say that there are 130,000 nadis which carry the energy of prana throughout the body. Out of these, 72,000 nadis converge in the cardiovascular system. More than half the number of nadis supply prana to the heart because the heart needs more prana to look after bodily functions. In the Chinese philosophy they say exactly the same thing. In fact, the Chinese and Indians were very close culturally and philosophically for thousands of years. Therefore, both always talk about two forces, universal and microcosmic.

We call these two forces ida and pingala, and we believe that these forces are conducted throughout the body, to each and every pore of the body, through thousands and thousands of channels or nadis. Out of these two, one is cold and the other is warm. Ida is considered to be the cold energy and pingala is considered to be the hot or warm energy. Thus the ida force is known as lunar and the pingala force is known as solar.

It is on this basis that the hatha yoga system has developed. 'Ha' and 'tha' are two different sounds. 'Ha' literally represents *Ham*. 'Tha' literally represents *Tham*. These are called bija mantras. *Ham* is the bija mantra for the moon and *Tham* is the bija mantra for the sun. *Ham* represents the ida nadi and *Tham* represents the pingala nadi. This is explained at the very beginning of all hatha yoga books. Union between the lunar force and the solar force is hatha yoga. So when we say we practise hatha

yoga physical exercises, don't you think that we make a technical mistake in the expression? It is illegal to say we practise hatha yoga!

In Chinese philosophy they talk about yin and yang, and the explanation is exactly the same. What we call chakras, in the Chinese system they are described as meridians, which means junction point. These two forces, yin and yang, represent the cold and the hot energies, which flow everywhere in the body. This means that prana is an omnipresent force in an object. If there is no prana in a particular part of the body, then the body is dead. So long as this energy, prana, flows equally, harmoniously, omnipresently, in each and every part of your body, you will never get sick and you will not die.

The tantric technologies developed a mental technique of controlling, supplying, redistributing and managing this pranic force in the physical body. They discovered many techniques by which you could withdraw the prana in a particular part of the body, or you could supply an excess of prana to a particular part of the body. All this was taught through a mental technique, which is known as prana vidya. It teaches how to raise the quantum of prana and distribute it to the different organs or the suffering organs of the body.

The same system was developed in China. They developed a different technology called acupuncture. It is exactly the same system, the only difference is, while the yogi tries to control the prana through the mind, they control the prana through needles.

In the ancient days there was a faculty in the medicinal system of ayurveda in India, where also they taught how to control or stop the prana by means of pricking a particular part of the body. This system of piercing with a sharp point was exactly like acupuncture. And, of course, acupuncture is a very successful science. I have myself

seen quite a few astounding effects of acupuncture. Many of my disciples in Munger are masters of acupuncture, therefore I have a very sound and thorough knowledge about acupuncture. I also have a very good friend in Japan. He is an internationally known personality in yoga and acupuncture, and I am one of the associates of his organization. His name is Dr Hiroshi Motoyama. I hope you know him. If you don't, I'm glad that I am introducing him to you.

He has done scientific work on acupuncture and kundalini yoga, and he has really brought in the language of science into these ancient techniques. What is that energy by which you are alive? Certainly not by the blood, not by vitamins, not by minerals, not by the food you eat. You live because of prana. 'You' means everything in this complex body. Where this prana or life force is blocked, that particular organ suffers from a disease.

Dr Motoyama has given a scientific commentary on my yogic system. I basically teach pawanmuktasana. It is a very easy series of asanas, sometimes it looks like fun and many of you will not be impressed by it. However, I have organized these exercises on the basis of pranic flow. They are not joint exercises; they are exercises of energy meridians. You understand energy meridians? There are thousands of chakras in the body, not only six. I again repeat, not only six. There are thousands of chakras in every part of the body from where the energy flows to other parts of the body. These are meridians. This has been established by scientific study. Therefore, Dr Hiroshi Motoyama thinks that acupuncture by needle and pawanmuktasana by movement are exactly the same. At the same time, he has placed many yogis from India and pranayama under scientific study.

There was a yogi by the name of Ramananda. He practised kapalbhati pranayama. Kapalbhati pranayama



is forced expiration and it is also considered one of the six kriyas or shatkarmas of hatha yoga. When Ramananda practised kapalbhati and he was exposed to modern scientific instruments, it was found that the reactions or processes within the physical body were taking place in exactly the same way as they do in a natural acupuncture operation.

I will tell you another very short incident from Dr Motoyama's experiments. A girl was put into a soundproof and magnet-proof chamber and she meditated. She meditated on mooladhara chakra and the pathway of pingala nadi. The room was totally dark. A video camera was focused on her abdomen and pelvis. In the next room,

a modern computer was registering the condition of her body and bodily processes.

She meditated for half an hour, after which she was brought out and the video film was played. Please remember that the room was totally dark. Even the girl could not see her own hand. After fifteen minutes of that film, suddenly a small light flashes. I'm trying to explain what pranic explosion is. There was a small light, it was not round shaped. It was the colour of a fluorescent lamp and as small as the light of a glow-worm.

The rest of the film is completely dark, but at one particular point that light is seen to come up and come

down, vanishing, again reappearing, going to the right, then going to the left, going to the centre, coming down, disappearing, like some kind of a dance. For about twelve to fifteen minutes this little fluorescent spark of light kept trying to rise in some direction but it could not, it would go into another direction, then disappear, again reappear and try to go up, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, and finally it disappeared. This video film was there in Dr Motoyama's institute and I have seen it. The little spark of light was the concentrated pranic force. This is the force which you have to create in prana vidya. But how to do it?

There is a practice, I don't know if I'll be able to tell you about that, I've wasted so much time talking about science. Anyway, I will tell you something about it. When you rotate prana a number of times, it gains momentum. You rub your palm fifty times, heat will be produced. In the same way, you raise the prana consciously up and down, up and down, up and down, forty times, and this light will be generated.

That girl made a mistake; or rather, she did not really do the proper practice. She concentrated on mooladhara chakra. Mooladhara chakra does not have enough prana; it is the seat of kundalini. Manipura chakra is the seat of prana. If she had concentrated on manipura chakra, there would have been a wave of light, not a particle of light.

From manipura chakra you trace the path of the pingala nadi to ajna chakra. You practise psychic breathing in the form of ujjayi, and from manipura chakra onward up and down, up and down. Do it forty times and every time you do it, you will get a better experience. You will have a better conscious control over the pranic force. After doing it forty times, stop the breath by concentrating on ajna chakra. From ajna chakra now distribute the prana



to the particular part of the body which is suffering. The distribution can be done once or twice in one retention because you can't retain the breath for a long time. For as long as you can retain, maybe half a minute or one minute, take the prana from ajna chakra to the part of the body which is sick. Do it in the posture of shavasana. You can even do it in padmasana or siddhasana, but not on any easy chair.

Finally, before I close my incomplete speech on prana vidya, I must say a few more things. I'm not an orthodox man; I don't hold any views on vegetarian or non-vegetarian diets. I teach according to the necessity of the person. Therefore, I must tell you that those people who want to practise prana vidya for healing their own sickness should be totally vegetarian, because food is a very important factor in connection with prana. Of course you will not misunderstand me or think that I'm telling you something religious. When I'm talking about a vegetarian diet I'm also excluding milk and dairy products because that is animal protein. I know that it is necessary for the body, but here I'm talking about a sick person who is trying to heal himself.

I have several documents from Tasmania; one of my disciples teaches prana vidya in Tasmania in her Yoga Healing Clinic. She has made tumours disappear. She has treated cancer.

Thus, you should raise the quality, you should raise the standard of your prana. It's easy to understand. If you run your tape recorder on an old battery, what does it sound like? So, what do you do? You either recharge the battery or fix a new battery. You don't want to fix a new battery for your body as yet! So, you need to recharge it. Prana vidya is a system of recharging your flat battery.

Hari Om Tat Sat





Come combattere uno dei nostri più grandi nemici
Yoga: sfida contro lo stress
Corpo e mente richiedono 'disciplina'

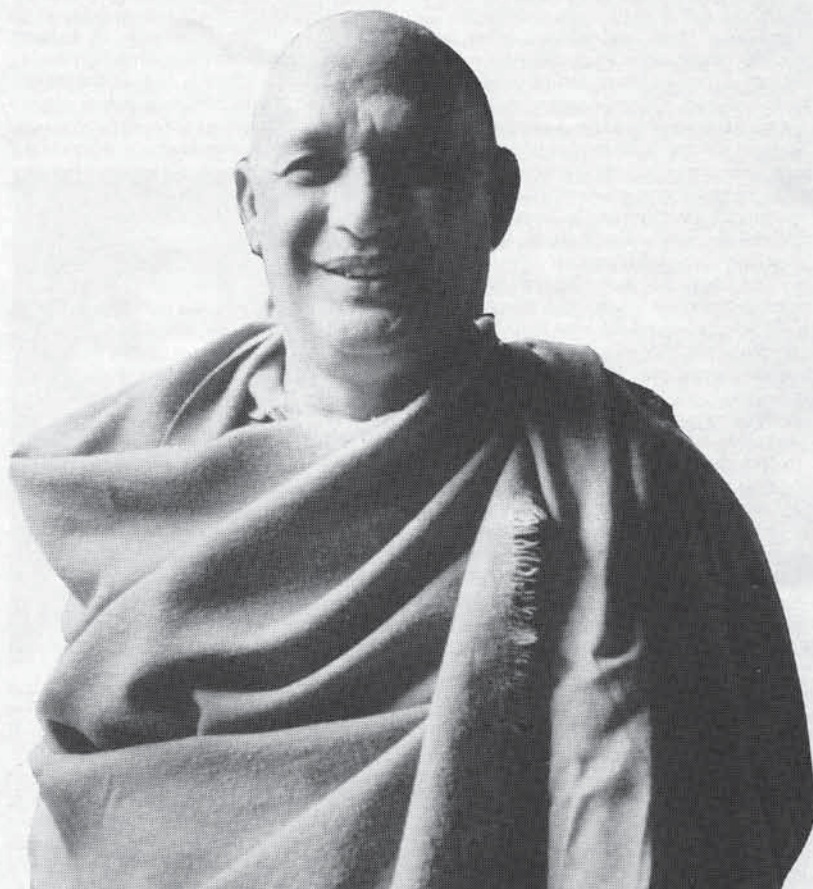
Il testo registrato
e tradotto
di una delle
conferenze
tenute da
Satyananda
al «Ciocco»

di Swami Satyananda

I medici e gli scienziati oggi mettono in relazione le malattie moderne dell'uomo con lo stress e la tensione e in tutto il mondo gli scienziati stanno lavorando molto in questo campo, arrivando alla conclusione che le condizioni mentali di stress possono causare dei problemi fisici.

La pressione del sangue e le malattie cardiovascolari oggi sono intimamente collegate alle condizioni di stress. Vi è una lunga lista di malattie che sono conosciute come malattie nate dallo stress e se studiate la lista scoprirete che l'89% di queste malattie scaturiscono da questo stress. Altri ancora hanno evidenziato le condizioni psicologiche dell'uomo in condizioni di stress. E perciò necessario studiare lo stress e vedere come può causare degli effetti in vari aspetti della vita e del fisico e infine che cosa sia, dopotutto, lo stress e da dov'è che viene.

Osservando gli antichi testi di yoga e, insieme, le ricerche moderne e scientifi-



Interview

Il Ciocco, May 1984

Q. Will the western mind, which is predominantly extrovert, find some difficulties with the practice of yoga nidra?

Paramahamsaji: Originally we also thought that it would be very difficult for the westerners to practise yoga nidra because their mind is restless all the time. However, we found later that after an initial practice of hatha yoga, they can relax very easily in yoga nidra. In fact, I found that yoga nidra is much easier for anyone who is restless and extroverted than for those who are introverted. But it is necessary to start with some other practices and then go to yoga nidra according to the temperament of the person.

For example, if you want to teach a young boy yoga nidra, it would be better if he practises hatha yoga and then yoga nidra. In the case of a middle-aged businessman, if he first listens to a calm and tranquil music and then practises yoga nidra, he'll find it easier. Those who are very restless and extroverted should first practise pranayama and then yoga nidra.

So, in this way, if one is not able to practise yoga nidra directly, or finds it difficult, they should start with some other practices and that will prepare them.

Q. So, yoga nidra should only be done with a teacher?

Paramahamsaji: At least you should start with a teacher. We have many yoga nidra tapes of course. You can practise with the help of tapes afterwards.

Q. Is yoga nidra an advanced practice?

Paramahansa ji: Yoga nidra has various forms. The first form, the preliminary form, can be used for mental therapy, but those who have been practising higher sadhana can use yoga nidra for astral projection.

Q. Is it necessary for spiritual realization to be a vegetarian and maintain brahmacharya, or can a person who is living in a community-type household also have the experience?

Paramahansa ji: Vegetarianism and brahmacharya are very good habits. Sometimes they are necessary for health, but that differs from person to person and place to place. However, if one wants to follow the spiritual path, then they are not a condition.

Q. Not even at the beginning or at the end?

Paramahansa ji: In my opinion, one should not even think about these things. When you are practising spiritual life and your consciousness becomes spotless, then certain decisions come to your mind. At that time, if this decision comes to you, do it.

Those who practise meditation for long hours and live a life of seclusion, for them brahmacharya and vegetarianism are definitely necessary conditions. If he who practises meditation for many hours takes a non-vegetarian diet, he will become sick. He won't be able to digest that. Brahmacharya is also indispensable for him because through brahmacharya he can conserve the energy, and that energy can be directed towards meditation. However, we should be careful about not asking everybody to become a vegetarian and brahmacharin because we have a physical body which is controlled by certain laws of nature.

nella mente inconscia.

Gli psicologi affermano che quando si sopprimono delle esperienze esse vengono immerse nella mente inconscia, manifestandosi in seguito durante i sogni e gli incubi. Quindi qualsiasi tipo di stress di cui si fa esperienza nella famiglia, nella società e nella vita può essere immesso nella mente inconscia e causarci dei disturbi. Qualche volta questi stress sono consci, a volte subconsci e anche inconsci.

Lo stress che colpisce la mente inconscia non è molto pericoloso. Ma lo stress che non conosciamo, che non vediamo e che viene immesso nella mente inconscia può causare molta confusione nella personalità, nella mente, nella vita.

Ora lo stress non arriva come una cosa improvvisa per la mente, ma arriva per una causa particolare. Tutto l'episodio dello stress ha origine ed inizio con la tensione. La tensione è una condizione del sistema nervoso. Quando si tende un elastico questo è sotto tensione e, similmente la tensione che si verifica nel sistema nervoso infine va a discapito di tutta la struttura del corpo fisico.

Secondo la filosofia yogica e secondo la scienza moderna vi sono tre tipi di tensioni: la tensione muscolare, la tensione mentale, la tensione emozionale.

Questo triplice aspetto di tensioni ha un effetto sul sistema nervoso e dal sistema nervoso poi si trasferisce a tutta la parte fisica dell'essere.

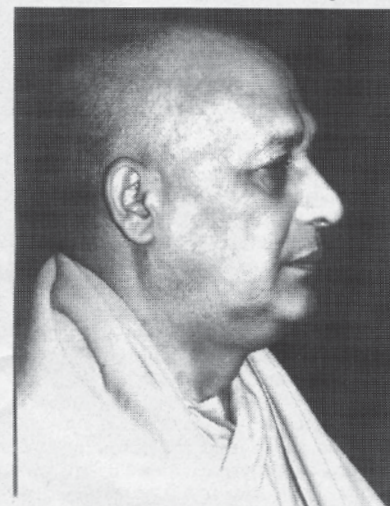
Qualcuno di voi senz'altro ha fatto esperienza nella vita che quando si è sotto tensione si possono fare molti errori. Ora bisogna vedere di definire quali sono queste tensioni che infine eventualmente culminano in stress.

La tensione muscolare è causata da un'eccessiva azione dei muscoli: il corpo fisico ha una risorsa limitata di energia e qualche volta dobbiamo lavorare più del necessario e dobbiamo prendere medicinali, cibo in abbondanza per poter far fronte e avere energia sufficiente per portare avanti il lavoro. Ad esempio gli sportivi in qualsiasi paese sono soggetti a pesanti sforzi e per questo vengono loro

«Le tensioni emozionali sono una forza potente nella vita umana, la cui persistenza può essere causa di stress...»

tensione mentale e il risultato di questa tensione è quella che si chiama la perdita di memoria. Quando questa tensione arriva al culmine allora si commettono gli errori. La mente, il cervello, il sistema nervoso e i sensi sono tutti interconnessi.

Ci sono cinque sensi che sono collegati al cervello e alla mente e questi cinque sensi sono collegati al sistema nervoso che è diviso in due parti chiamate simpatico e



parasimpatico e di conseguenza qualsiasi nostra percezione e cognizione coinvolge il sistema nervoso, i cinque sensi e il cervello.

Ogni nostro pensiero genera nel corpo la produzione di ormoni, stimolando le ghiandole del sistema endocrino. Allora quando pensate alla paura, un pensiero di paura, il sistema endocrino comincia a

Il terzo tipo di tensione è la tensione emozionale. Gli esseri umani hanno conosciuto la tensione emozionale e queste tensioni emozionali scaturiscono dal nostro rapporto con gli eventi le persone, gli oggetti. Dal momento che possediamo una filosofia, perché l'essere umano è anche un essere filosofico, è sotto questo aspetto che si ha un rapporto con le persone, gli eventi, le situazioni della vita. Ne deriva che non si ha un rapporto con un uomo perché è un uomo, ma si ha un certo rapporto perché questa persona piace o non piace. Vi mettete in rapporto, in relazione con un oggetto, non per l'oggetto stesso ma perché vi piace o non vi piace, o perché è vostro o perché non è vostro. Di conseguenza come esseri umani si è costantemente coinvolti emozionalmente con gli oggetti, con tutto ciò che ci circonda. Ma tutto quello che avviene non è sempre come si desidera, per cui quando qualcosa avviene a seconda dei nostri desideri allora vi è una tensione emozionale positiva e quando invece succede qualcosa che non ci piace c'è una tensione emozionale negativa.

Le tensioni emozionali possono causare l'ulcera a peptica e l'asma, possono causare l'insanità mentale, possono rendere una persona un criminale, possono rendere violenti, possono farvi diventare un santo o un devoto, o possono infine rendervi servitore dell'umanità.

Le tensioni emozionali sono un forza potente nella vita umana, che non va sottovalutata. Questi tre diversi tipi di tensione, quando continuano a persistere, causano lo stress.

Questi stress, queste tensioni si espandono per tutto il corpo e possono in seguito passare attraverso dei canali pranici o attraverso dei canali mentali.

Studiamo adesso un po' quello che riguarda il corpo. Secondo l'hatha yoga, di cui dovrete essere a conoscenza, vi sono due forze nel corpo fisico. Queste due forze in hatha yoga sono conosciute come **Idā** e **Pīṅgalā**, e rappresentano **Siva** e **Śakti**, nonché la coscienza e la vita o il sole e la luna. Questi due canali fluiscono

sacrale, un altro è nel plesso coccigeo, poi nel plesso solare, nel plesso cardiaco e l'ultimo nel plesso cervicale. Ora da questi punti d'incontro un'infinità di meridiani si muovono, portano la coscienza e il prāṇa distribuendolo in tutto il corpo. Nello hatha yoga si dice che 72000 **nāḍī** sono veicolo e conducono la coscienza e il prāṇa. Anche nella scienza moderna si parla quasi lo stesso linguaggio. Oltre questi due punti di incrocio vi sono altri due punti dove l'energia ha origine e poi vi è un altro punto dove questa energia termina.

I punti dove queste due energie originano e quelli dove si incontrano e si uniscono sono i due punti più importanti. Per creare armonia e equilibrio tra queste due forze i punti di origine e di incontro devono essere ben studiati.

Nello hatha yoga il punto di incontro delle due forze si chiama **ājñā cakra** e il punto di origine si chiama **mūlādhāra cakra**. Nel rāja yoga sutra si parla dei klesha delle affezioni e all'inizio del rāja yoga sutra si parla di 5 tipi di affezioni, di 5 tipi di klesha e lo scopo dello yoga è il controllo della mente per controllare questi klesha.

Ora vi posso dare qualche idea a proposito di esperimenti che sono stati fatti recentemente. È stato fatto molto lavoro sull'hatha yoga e anche su altre

un punto di vista scientifico. Sono stati fatti molti studi, molte osservazioni a proposito della scienza di cui vi sto parlando. È stato scoperto che il corpo, sotto varie condizioni (comprese quelle di stress), produce diversi tipi di siero o di ormoni, queste secrezioni appartengono a un sottosistema del sistema endocrino. Come risultato di queste secrezioni ormonali diversi mutamenti avvengono nel corpo fisico, quindi, queste condizioni di stress possono alterare la funzionalità delle varie gamme di onde cerebrali.

Il cervello ha delle onde e dei movimenti cerebrali ben definiti; ognuna di queste onde ha un effetto non solamente sul corpo in generale, ma in modo particolare sul cuore. Quando sono presenti o predominano le onde **delta** come può essere per delle altre onde, vi sono delle alterazioni ben definite sul sistema endocrino, sulla respirazione e sulla funzione del cuore. Per esempio quando predominano le onde **delta** il procedimento della respirazione è molto, molto lento, l'azione cardiovascolare è minimizzata e a quel punto il vostro corpo consuma una quantità minima di ossigeno; invece quando sono presenti le onde **teta** o le onde **beta** allora il corpo consuma una grande quantità di ossigeno e il sistema cardiovascolare (cioè il cuore) è sotto eccitazione. Quando,

cardiovascolare la persona o il paziente dovrebbe portarsi alle onde cerebrali **alfa**.

Vi darò un altro esempio. Supponete che uno scassinatore, un ladro si stia preparando a fare un colpo, quando questa persona si avvicinerà all'obiettivo il battito del cuore aumenterà sempre di più e i suoi nervi se non sono forti cederanno. Allora inizierà a sudare, la sua bocca diventerà asciutta (se l'avete fatto potete capirlo) e poi si sentirà come se dovesse andare al gabinetto. Questa condizione è creata, si verifica poiché c'è un eccitamento nel sistema delle ghiandole adrenali.

Attraverso yoga nidra io ho lavorato circa con un migliaio di pazienti; circa 12 anni fa ho avuto un contributo dal governo indiano e per un periodo di 5 anni sono stati fatti questi esperimenti in un'università medica e ai pazienti, con questi problemi cardiovascolari, veniva insegnato yoga nidra e niente altro. Esaminati tutti i risultati delle reazioni di questi pazienti, è stato scoperto che la pratica di yoga nidra è molto buona per persone che soffrono di problemi cardiovascolari.

Yoga nidra è una scienza molto sistematica. In questo momento non è possibile per me parlare della pratica completa di yoga nidra perché la maggior parte delle persone ormai la conosce

Unless you are a perfected yogi, you are always under the laws of nature: hunger, sleep, sex, fear. They are the laws of nature of the human body. Therefore, I do not tell people to go against nature up to a certain extent. It would be like telling a little child not to play with dolls because I think that they are useless, or telling a householder not to go his wife or her husband because I don't practise this. You must be very careful about the laws of nature.

India is a very hot country, so vegetarianism is best for India. Indians are also very fertile people, so brahmacharya is necessary, otherwise there would be a thousand million people in India. Tropical countries must be vegetarian, temperate countries half and half and arctic countries non-vegetarian. This is how a general division can be made.

There is another point. Why do we decide to leave a non-vegetarian diet? Either because it is bad for health or because it means killing an animal. These considerations can make one a vegetarian, I agree, but you don't have to practise it to follow yoga.

Q. Can you make it clear what is tantra and maithuna? There is a lot of confusion, especially in the West.

Paramahansa: Maithuna and sex are not synonymous. Maithuna is a graduated practice in tantra. The practice of maithuna between a male and a female is not a preliminary practice; it is the ultimate practice. Maithuna in tantra has various graduated stages. In fact, in Sanskrit maithuna means 'union'. Not necessarily union between man and woman. It indicates the union between two forces in us. It is also means union between the Shiva-Shakti principles in us and also union between the lower mind and the higher mind.

After these unions have been accomplished, then the union between the male and female partners can



take place or may take place. Sexual life in itself cannot awaken spiritual consciousness. On the contrary, it dissipates the energy. Therefore, in my opinion, maithuna has to be properly explained to the people in the West.

Q. A lot of people are practising yoga with a lot of force. They say they must become a vegetarian, they must become like this or like that because yoga is saying all these things. A lot of western people are making these mistakes to become yogis and saints, so they are doing this with a lot of rigidity.

Paramahansa: This is not how yoga is practised. I will give an example here. If you want to go to London from Rome, you know the way, but if you want to go to London from New York, you don't have to come to Rome, or if you want to come from Lagos, you don't have to come to Rome. You see, everybody has his own way to reach the higher consciousness and he should start from that point where he stands.

I think this is a sort of reaction, or rather emphasis, which has come into the western countries because for a long time there was an overemphasis on non-vegetarian diet. Scientists have been telling in the last few years about the disadvantages of a non-vegetarian diet and the advantages of a vegetarian diet. In fact, I have read that in the western countries those who offer consultation on sexual matters to couples, advise them to give up non-vegetarian diet and take up whole grain and vegetarian diet. In this way, thousands of manuals are published every year eulogizing vegetarian diet. Some people also believe now that we have no right to take the life of any creature for our sake. This is also the Catholic view because the philosophy of the Catholic religion is full of compassion. Perhaps that is working.

anche se talvolta viene confusa con l'ipnotismo. Una volta nel 1968 stavo insegnando questa pratica in Germania ed è stato pubblicato sul giornale che insegnavo pratiche ipnotiche.

L'ipnotismo è un argomento completamente differente. La parola ipnotismo trae il suo significato dalla lingua greca e significa «dormire profondamente». In yoga nidrā non vi è nessun ipnotismo; e non vi è nessun sonno quando si pratica yoga nidrā. Durante la pratica di yoga nidrā si dovrebbe rimanere coscienti, consapevoli per tutto il periodo. È stato scoperto che durante la pratica di yoga nidrā il cervello produce delle onde cerebrali di tipo alfa e queste onde alfa sono considerate molto importanti per rimuovere la tensione cardiovascolare e per abbassare le tensioni.

Oltre a questo esiste un'altra pratica, in quanto yoga nidrā vi può essere utile

questa particella è conosciuta come archetipo, questa particella è conosciuta come samskāra.

In oriente si chiama Karma. («Sì, quello è il suo karma»). Cos'è che succede al vostro karma? Deve essere spurgato, allora prima di yoga nidra si dovrebbe praticare trātaka.

Trātaka viene praticato su un punto nero, può essere praticato sulla fiamma di una candela, può essere praticato su uno yantra, vi sono moltissime forme sulle quali si può praticare trātaka e non è necessario elencarle.

Trātaka viene praticato con gli occhi aperti, con il corpo fermo, con gli occhi e le palpebre che non si muovono. Cosa succede quando praticate trātaka? Queste particelle nel cervello vengono stimulate. Vi sono delle pratiche che sono molto potenti, p.es. la concentrazione sugli yantra è molto potente, anche la

zione a seconda della resistenza e della qualità dell'allievo o dall'aspirante; se è una persona debole allora insegnategli la concentrazione su un punto nero o sulla fiamma di una candela. Ma se pensate che possa sostenere, possa far fronte alla visione del suo essere che è represso, insegnategli la concentrazione su Kali o su qualche yantra.

Nell'antica Grecia e nell'antico Egitto erano conosciuti molti diversi mandala, ma l'Occidente ha voltato la schiena a quei mandala poiché essi non sono stati messi in relazione alla psicologia umana, sono stati confusi con divinità, dei, dee, etc. e di conseguenza li abbiamo persi tutti.

Se vogliamo eliminare le condizioni di stress e le tensioni questi mandala dovrebbero essere riportati in vita, anche se purtroppo i mandala egiziani e greci sono andati persi. Gli studiosi, i conoscitori non ci sono più. Potreste solo trovarli nei musei archeologici; ma non c'è lì nessuno che vi possa dire in realtà di che si tratta. Ma nello yoga, nel tantra vi sono dei mandala e vi sono degli studiosi che ve ne possono parlare.

Lo yoga e il tantra hanno mantenuto ininterrotta la tradizione. La tradizione yogica e tantrica non si trova nei musei, non è stata persa nell'antichità, è viva nella vostra vita. Quindi dobbiamo mettere in relazione i problemi moderni dell'uomo e lo yoga. Da uno dei più grandi pensatori moderni è stato detto che la disciplina più profonda interiore viene attraverso lo yoga, e questa disciplina non è una disciplina religiosa. Disciplina del corpo, disciplina del prāṇa, disciplina del sistema nervoso, disciplina del cervello e la disciplina di tutta l'esistenza della mente: quello è lo yoga.

Non vi sto parlando di una disciplina puritana. Se il sistema fisico non è disciplinato allora potreste avere dissenteria o diarrea. Se le cellule del corpo non sono disciplinate allora si possono avere dei tumori, se il sistema digestivo non è disciplinato allora potreste avere l'epatite.



Svami Satyananda durante la conferenza

fino a un certo punto, ma vi sono altri problemi che ancora non sono stati risolti. Cosa avviene ai samskāra, agli archetipi che sono contenuti nel profondo della persona?

I problemi vengono fuori dal «magazzino interiore», le esperienze sono dentro di voi, il dolore e la felicità sono dentro di voi in forma di seme. ora queste

concentrazione sul mandala è molto potente e poi dipende anche dalla qualità del mandala e dello yantra. Per esempio abbiamo un mandala, quello di Kali. Spero sappiate cosa intendo per Kali e non sto a spiegarlo adesso. È un mandala dall'aspetto molto feroce. Praticando trātaka sul mandala di Kali questo porterà in superficie tutte le forze

The consumption of non-vegetarian food has increased only in the last seventy years. The first wave of meat-producing factories came during World War I. When the war was over, what to do with the factories? If they were closed, there would be unemployment and economic depression. So they continued. Then came another wave during World War II, and the same thing happened. So, if you must eat a vegetarian diet and maintain economic balance, this is the problem you have to solve. This is not a philosophical or yogic problem, this is an economic problem.

Q. What would you advise to western people about to approach spiritual life. What should they practise?

Paramahamsaji: My advice to everybody is that they must practise hatha yoga every day. That is the way by which they can maintain good health. There is so much pollution in the West and diseases are increasing day by day. People die of cancer and heart disease; there is a lot of arthritis and rheumatism. Mental problems are also on the rise.

Hatha yoga is the best of all practices. Later, if you want, you can practise meditation, but they should practise meditation after they have consulted a proper master.

Q. There are so many meditational practices.

Paramahamsaji: Yes. If you meet the right teacher, he will tell you what to practice. You can't practise all.

Q. Is there anything you can say in connection with the yogi who went to space? Is he a yogi?

Paramahamsaji: He is a yoga teacher. He was sent into space for research on yoga and space sickness. The cosmonauts who go into space develop many problems there, which are partially due to weightlessness. They have problems like nausea, digestive disturbance, nervous disturbance. Yoga is considered very important in this situation because in the practices of yoga, we try to control the negative aspects of weightlessness. Therefore, this man was sent into orbit to work with other cosmonauts.

They have been working on this project for a very long time and I am confident that the research results



will be produced soon, and they will bring out a set of practices for cosmonauts. The main thing is, when the body becomes weightless, as it does during meditation as well, how do you manage? In yoga this is one of the most important practices. Many people who practise meditation don't like it. There are many cases where people just jump up.

So, in meditation, we gradually train the mind to face that experience. Therefore, if a person who has already practised meditation and experienced lightness goes into space and experiences the same thing there, he won't have any problem. There is another problem in space. When the body becomes weightless, then you have many kinds of psychic experiences and you can't face it. They may have nightmarish dreams. They may see shadows and lights, have hallucinations.

You see, this physical body has different reactions in different places. As you go high up in the mountains you have different reactions. People who go on an expedition to the Mount Everest experience different reactions. Gravity controls your experience; it controls the behaviour of your nervous system and brain. When you are out of the influence of gravity, you cannot handle it if you have not practised anything. So, the future cosmonauts will practise yoga and then go into space.

Q. When it's stated about some visions of your guru and other unusual spiritual experiences, what would you say about such experiences?

Paramahamsaji: I have so many visions in my mind that I can't say anything particular about it.

Q. Something about one experience which could be an explanation or example to the public, so that they could come into the idea of the spirit and understand.

Paramahamsaji: I have many visions which only concern the state of my consciousness. I have many visions which indicate my line of action. I have many visions about world affairs. I follow only one line of visions: about the future of yoga and of mankind. These visions have come very clearly to me.

Earlier, yoga was not known to other parts of the world, but after I had a vision it became clear to me that the world was ready to accept yoga. I also had a vision that through yoga the world will have a bright existence. For example, in 1950 when I was on the shores of South India where the Arabian Sea and open land meet, I had a vision. I spent all night on the shores of the sea and I

saw that many people were swimming towards me. They were black people, white people, yellow people, brown people, men, women, modern ladies and old-fashioned ladies, little children, all were swimming towards me. This vision has come to me many times.

While teaching and preaching yoga throughout the world, I have also encountered certain obstacles or difficulties. I faced obstacles from materialistic groups, religious groups and church groups, but in the vision, everything became clear. Once I was in South America, at Colombia, Bogota. It is a Catholic country and it was very difficult for me to talk to the people because they could not understand anything beyond their own religion. One



night, I saw a very big church and the church was moving towards me. Finally it came upon me and I was in it. Soon after, a very important Jesuit priest took interest in yoga, so much so that he became a significant helper to me and the press, and they gave me a wide coverage.

So, visions have guided my movements in many places. I was once in Puerto Rico, there also I had a vision which made it clear what I should do.

Q. In which country did you find it easiest to propagate yoga, and how do you proceed in this?

Paramahamsaji: The easiest of all countries in the world for yoga is Australia. But now I find every country easy; I have no problem at all.

Q. How do you carry on this propagation of yoga?

Paramahamsaji: Where there is demand, there will be supply. There is a demand throughout the world for yoga. Scientists and doctors are talking about it and hundreds of thousands of yoga teachers are now ready and teaching yoga. Therefore I don't really have to do anything. I attend the seminars and address people, and I prefer to create yoga teachers. I initiate people into sannyasa and make them dedicated.

Q. Can you explain how yoga nidra could be useful to heart patients.

Paramahamsaji: Yoga nidra has been used throughout the world by doctors on their patients. It is a guided system of relaxation and they say that through the practices of yoga nidra, alpha waves become prominent in the brain. This experiment has been carried out everywhere. When alpha waves become predominant in the brain the blood pressure decreases. Consequently,

the stress, the pressure from the heart is also released. In the opinion of scientists, the practice of yoga nidra is able to release physical, mental and deep-rooted tensions.

Scientific experiments have been carried out extensively. What happens during the practice of yoga nidra in the body? They have studied the biochemical changes, skin resistance and also the influxes in the nervous system. What they have found is that this is the best known practice of yoga for releasing hypertension and resultant diseases.

It is a very simple practice which everyone can do. In the beginning, one needs a teacher to guide but later one can do it by oneself, with the help of a tape, and much later even without a tape. There are many ways of practising yoga nidra. Everything depends on the state of mind of the person. There is a specific practice in yoga nidra. You concentrate on your breath, making it deeper than natural, and count it backwards from 100 to 1, very, very carefully. If you miss the sequence, then you have to start again from 100.

When you are practising this, you can think about one of the four centres in the body. One centre is the abdomen, the second is the upper diaphragm, the third is the throat, and the fourth is the nostrils. You can practise on one or all of them, one by one, and count in the reverse order. It takes almost half an hour, and after that you are physically and mentally fresh.

By the practice of yoga nidra, you can decrease the quantity of sleep and increase the quality, and if you can adjust your eating habits, then you can practise yoga nidra for three, four or five hours also. Then you can develop the psychic vision, you can develop inner awareness. But in this case, you have to adjust your food and make it bland and light.

Q. Can this practice be realized by aged persons, and how soon could we see the benefits?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga nidra can be practised by everybody irrespective of age, there is no problem. They can utilize it in the manner they like.

Q. One experiment was carried in India on heart patients. Can you say something in particular about this experiment?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, in 1967, I took the help of the Government of India, and some doctors conducted research on the effects of yoga on coronary diseases. This was done in a medical college hospital in the state of Bihar and the total period was five years. During this period, about one thousand or even more people were referred to this yoga department and it was found that many of them could manage their cardiac condition with minimum medication.

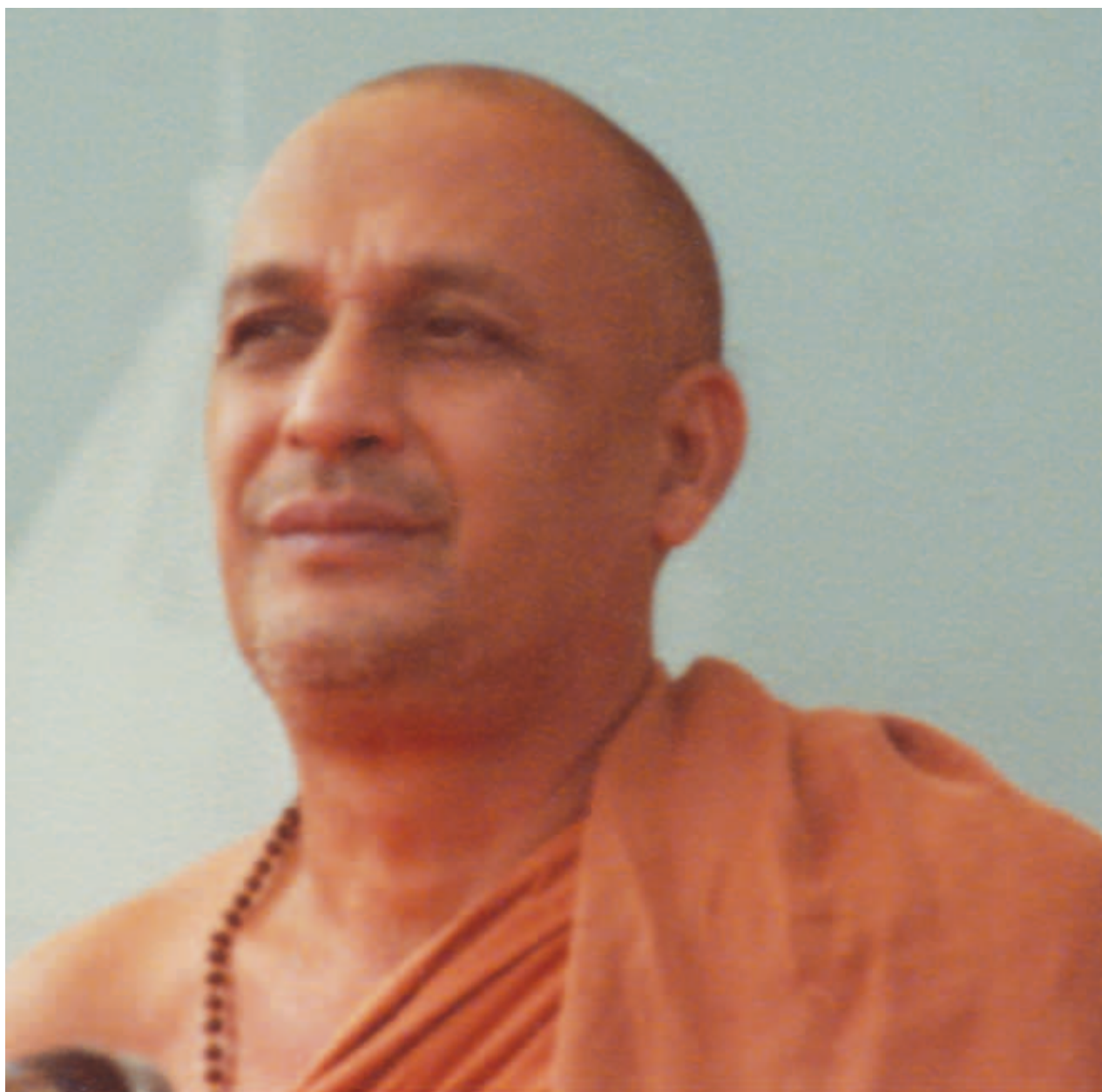
You see, we are not against medication; we are against over-medication. We do not like reckless and thoughtless medication, but we believe that medication is a necessary psychological support for the patient. At the same time, we do not want to destroy the medical process. When a person is suffering from heart disease, you can't just tell him not to take any medicine. Therefore, we say, take medicine, but practise yoga also. However, we have found that the daily dose of medicine decreases significantly with the practice of yoga.

People who have a weak willpower can't give up medicine because they are frightened. So they practise meditation and yoga side by side. Then they develop confidence and on the basis of that confidence they give up the drugs.

Q. So the results are positive?

Paramahamsaji: Astounding!





Satsang

Il Ciocco, May 1984

Q. Can you throw more light on the practice of vipareeta karani mudra and bindu visarga? It is said that by practising this, soma falls down and dies in manipura and its benefit is to keep young, delay old age and death.

Paramahamsaji: In kriya yoga, the first kriya is known as vipareeta karani mudra. *Vipareeta karani* means creating a reverse process. When you put your car into reverse gear, it is called vipareeta karani.

It is said that in bindu visarga the nectar drips. Bindu visarga is a chakra above ajna chakra situated in the cranial passage in the brain. In the cranial passage there is a small depression where there is a very small amount of fluid. This fluid has to be brought down and it is done by the practice of khechari mudra.

Khechari mudra is a practice in which you fold your tongue back and stick it to the upper palate. When the tip of the tongue enters into the upper epiglottis, it stimulates a particular gland or centre. That particular centre is directly connected with bindu visarga. As a result of that contact, bindu visarga is simulated and then the ambrosia or nectar begins to flow.

First it comes down to vishuddhi. In vishuddhi chakra it is refined. Then the body assimilates it. It comes down to manipura chakra. Manipura chakra is considered to be the centre of sun or fire. When this fluid reaches manipura chakra, the heat or fire of manipura chakra dries this fluid. Therefore in yoga it is said that you will have to reverse the process of flow of this fluid. In vipareeta karani mudra, by conscious force this fluid is sent back to vishuddhi chakra. As a result, the yogi attains a new body. *Amrit pan* means

the drinking of nectar, and this is a very important practice of kriya yoga.

I want to tell you a little about khechari mudra. There are two types of khechari mudra. One is practised by hatha yogis and the other is practised by raja yogis. Hatha yogis cut the root of the tongue by using a leaf or sharp thistle. They practise this cutting every day, little by little, and then they elongate the tongue by rubbing it with butter. Just as you milk the udder of a cow, they milk the tongue. As a result, the tongue gets elongated. Then it is to be inserted into the upper epiglottis, the upper part of the nose.

When the tip of the tongue enters into the upper nasal passage, it blocks the whole system. This is the khechari mudra practised by hatha yogis and through this mudra they even attain jada samadhi. They can remain in this samadhi for many days, even underground. Through khechari mudra they suspend their breathing process and the pumping of the heart. This form of khechari mudra is a very difficult practice and should be attempted only at a very early age.

In raja yoga, there is another type of khechari mudra, also known as nabhi mudra. In this you simply fold the tongue and stick it to the upper palate. It is almost what you do in sheetali pranayama. Gradually, your tongue goes higher inside the palate. This practice of khechari mudra takes quite some time to accomplish, but everybody can do it. Some people find it very easy and others find it difficult. The flexibility of the tongue is the main factor. Therefore, those who practise it give up salt and meat because animal protein and salt both makes the arteries and the system hard.

When we practise khechari mudra in kriya yoga or ajapa japa, or in any other practice, then you can also create ambrosia. If your body is pure, has no toxic matter and the metabolism is ideal, then after some time you will



experience a sweet taste in your saliva, but if the body is impure, there is a lot of toxic matter in it and the metabolism is not functioning properly, then you will get a bitter taste.

When khechari mudra becomes successful, you feel a heightened experience whenever you use it. The effect of a successful khechari mudra is intoxicating. The mind becomes quiet, the body steady and the body emanates a very good fragrance. You see many psychic visions in meditation. You can realize yantras and mandalas in meditation. So, that was a brief introduction to vipareeta karani mudra, amrit pan, bindu visarga and kriya yoga.

Q. I have been practising hatha yoga from a book. Is it necessary for me to consult a guru about my practices?

Paramahamsaji: You should have asked the book itself, because it is written in every book very clearly that you should approach a guru or an expert master. I know you have skipped that particular passage or statement.

You can practise quite a few things with the help of a teacher. Some people are geniuses at doing things by themselves. For example, I used to practise neti when I was a student and I did not learn it from anyone. I just did

it for a game, for play. Once it came into my mind that if you can insert a rope into the nose of a bull, why not into mine? So I inserted a tube and brought it out the other nostril without the help of a book.

However, even for shatkarmas, not to talk of higher hatha yoga practices, you must have a guru. The shatkarmas of hatha yoga are very efficient. They purify the body, there is no doubt, but sometimes they do not suit some people. If you are suffering from nasal sickness, sometime neti is fantastic and sometimes it makes the whole thing worse. So, neti, dhauti or any other practice must be learned from someone who is experienced in it.

After the practice of shatkarmas, if you do asana and pranayama, then the teaching instructions and guidance of the guru becomes compulsory. After the practice of asana and pranayama one needs to practise bandhas and mudras such as vajroli mudra and sahajoli mudra. How can you do them without the guidance of the guru? Hatha yoga talks about chakras, bija mantras and concentration. They are so difficult to understand and practise without the guidance of an experienced teacher.

You are perhaps doing yoga postures. That is all right, you can do them, but I think you have not practised the shatkarmas. When you feel the necessity of practising shatkarma, you will definitely have to go to an experienced teacher.

Q. Apart from maithuna, what are the other ways to awaken the kundalini. Is it possible to awaken the kundalini through the practice of personal mantra?

Paramahamsaji: This question was put once upon a time to Shiva by Parvati. Shiva is the guru and Parvati is the disciple and both of them were sitting on top of Mount Kailash. Shiva replied that there are 1,25,000 practices for the awakening of kundalini.

People are neck-deep in sensuality. Therefore, it is necessary for me to elevate them from that state, and the path of maithuna is that by which they can be redeemed. However, it is not the only way.

Shiva goes on to teach Parvati the secret science of Sri Yantra. Then he teaches her the science of great liberation, *maha nirvana tantra*. Then he goes on to teach her the science of kriya yoga. So, in this way Shiva goes on teaching Parvati many forms of yoga and many techniques through which one can awaken the kundalini. During his instructions, he talks about mantra, yantra and mandala. He tells her that all the practices for the awakening of kundalini should relate to these three.

Mantra is the sound symbol of the universe. Yantra is the geometrical symbol of the universe and mandala is the pictorial symbol of the universe. These three things represent the subtle forces in the universe and all are present in everybody. Every sound has a yantra and a mandala. Whichever mantra you practise has a sound and yantra and mandala. Therefore, you can awaken the higher experience through the practice of your own mantra also.

Since ancient times there have been two paths. One is the path of indulgence and the other is the path of abstinence. The path of abstinence is called the path of brahmacharya. That is the supreme path, it is the most powerful path. Since everybody cannot practise it, it is not designed for everyone. If one has the willpower, understanding and strength to follow the path of brahmacharya, then the path of maithuna is out of question. Therefore, we should understand this topic very clearly, otherwise everybody will only talk about maithuna and brahmacharya. In raja yoga, the third element in the yamas is brahmacharya.

The path of mantra is a very powerful one. The mantra which you have received from your guru can give you

higher experience, but then you will have to practise your mantra in various ways. You can practise it with the mala, with the rhythm of the breath, in the spinal passage or in each chakra for some time. You can practise your mantra outside you in space. In this way, there are various ways of practising the mantra.

Q. What is the importance of the effect of shambhavi mudra?

Paramahamsaji: Shambhavi mudra is centralizing the pupils of the eyes between the two eyebrows. There are various mudras, as you know, and shambhavi mudra is one of the most important mudras. It awakens the ajna chakra. Ajna chakra is the terminating point of ida, pingala and sushumna, which means that ajna chakra is the confluence of these three forces. When you practise shambhavi mudra, you bring about a union of these forces.

Of course, the technique of shambhavi mudra is to be perfected gradually. First, if you find it difficult, practise trataka. Then concentrate on the middle of the eyebrow centre and gradually increase the period of shambhavi mudra. When you practise shambhavi mudra you can visualize a spot of light in the middle of the eyebrows. When you visualize this spot of light, the heartbeat becomes very slow. In fact, it has been found that during the practice of shambhavi mudra, the body is under total relaxation. Many scientific experiments have been conducted on this and all the studies prove that when you practise shambhavi mudra, the body becomes free from tension.

For every chakra there is a contact point. For ajna chakra the contact point is bhrumadhya, for vishuddhi chakra the throat, for anahata the heart, for manipura the navel. In this way, every chakra has a contact centre

just like every light has a contact centre at the switch. Therefore, in order to operate ajna chakra, or in order to do anything with ajna chakra, there is no other way except to practise shambhavi mudra.

Suppose I ask you to concentrate on ajna chakra. How will you do it because you do not know where it is. You can imagine. You can concentrate forcibly, maybe on the backside of the brain, at the top of the spine or at the pineal gland. However, just by trying to concentrate on ajna chakra you cannot locate that centre. When you concentrate on bhrumadhya, we say you are concentrating on ajna. That is what we write in the books, so many people

think that ajna chakra is at the eyebrow centre. In fact, ajna chakra is at the top of the spine. This is the contact centre. In the same way, we ask you to concentrate on manipura chakra and indicate the navel. Manipura chakra is not at the navel at all. It is in the spine, but the navel is the contact centre. If you concentrate on the navel, then you are concentrating on manipura chakra.

Q. Is the awakening of the chakras and the awakening of kundalini simultaneous, or does one precede the other?

Paramahamsaji: Thank you for the question. This is a very important question and those of you who are

interested must listen carefully. When we say 'awakening of kundalini', we mean three things, awakening of the chakras, awakening of sushumna and awakening of Shakti. These three things are indicated by a general expression called 'awakening'. Therefore, the practice must follow a particular order.

If you just awaken the Shakti and sushumna is not awakened, through which way you will conduct it to ajna chakra? You have a car and no roads, so the car has to remain in the garage. Therefore, asanas should be practised for awakening the chakras. Bhujangasana, shalabhasana, matsyasana and many other asanas which



you practise are intended for first purifying the chakras and then awakening the chakras.

The chakras are like junction boards that you find inside an electrical room. From every chakra many hundreds of nerves go right, left, up and down, to every part of the



When we say 'awakening of kundalini', we mean three things, awakening of the chakras, awakening of sushumna and awakening of Shakti. These three things are indicated by a general expression called 'awakening'. Therefore, the practice must follow a particular order.

body and they carry all kinds of energy to make your body live. When the awakening of the chakras takes place then you feel very light. You have very mild visions, I am using the word 'mild'. They are not fantastic or frightening. Sometimes you can see a mountain, a garden, a flower, birds, a butterfly, or sometimes a very little light.

Next comes the awakening of sushumna. Sushumna is connected with the autonomic nervous system and controls the whole brain. Awakening of sushumna is most important before the awakening of Shakti. When the awakening of sushumna takes place, you have very impressive psychic visions. They are not frightening. They are very impressive. Once I saw the whole earth just as cosmonauts see it from space and it was breaking into two pieces. You have such impressive visions when the awakening of sushumna takes place.

In fact, when sushumna awakens, the whole brain, the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere, undergoes an extraordinary experience. It is at this time that you see the gods and goddesses and angels and divine beings. That indicates the awakening of sushumna. In the Bible it is said to be the path between earth and heaven. You may say, this is the divine pathway. In order to awaken sushumna, you have to practise the shatkarmas and then pranayama. There is no method more powerful than pranayama for the awakening of sushumna.

After the awakening of sushumna you have the awakening of Shakti. When this takes place, one does not feel hungry at all. One does not feel like talking to anybody, but just sitting quietly like an idiot. The inner visions are nightmarish because the awakening of Shakti is the awakening or exploding of the unconscious, which is the storehouse of all archetypes. All your karmas are there. All your depressions and frustrations are there. You are there. People feel frightening passion and intense

sexuality. This is the state in which we say that Satan tempts us.

So the awakening of the chakras, then awakening of sushumna and then awakening of Shakti should take place in that order, not one before the other. That is why we emphasize on hatha yoga, but at the same time, other yogas should not be underestimated. The guru is the most important figure because he has to control the sadhana of the disciple. I have come across many people who are putting the cart before the horse.

Quite recently one young man came to me from Yugoslavia and said that his Shakti is awakened and he does not know what to do. I told him to practise asana and pranayama. He said, "But Swamiji, they are too preliminary for me." I said, "Then keep your kundalini in the garage because there is no road."

Mooladhara is the garage for the kundalini. Sushumna is the highway. Ajna chakra is the destination and the different chakras in between are the intermediary stations. Therefore, an aspirant must understand what he should accomplish first and what he should accomplish next.

Q. How can you overcome desire and attachment?

Paramahamsaji: By having satsang. You cannot overcome desire and attachment without involving the mind. When you go to satsang and have interaction with wise people, then you know how to practise detachment and desirelessness.

Lord Buddha used to ask, "What is the ultimate aim of your desire?" Every desire brings another desire, there is an endless chain of desires and no desire is ever satisfied. As a result, we suffer from frustration and disappointment. Therefore, try to practise satsang.

Lecture to RYE Teachers

Venice, May 1984

Hari Om Tat Sat

When the positive benefits of yogic science are clearly evident to people, then the main thing we have to do is to prepare the teachers. For it is through the teachers that you will be able to spread this science. In many countries, including France, many teachers are being prepared from time to time to look after this need. A kind of syllabus should be drawn up for this purpose, so that those intending to become teachers can attend courses.

It is very important that the psychology of children is understood in the context of changing times. The psychology of children today is not the same as it was twenty years ago. The family situations are changing; entertainment and education are changing. The stress on children is also changing. Therefore, teachers will also have to be trained on these aspects of children's lives.

We find that children are very interested in the act and art of visualization. This art of visualization forms the basic philosophy of yoga because the power of imagination of children and their capacity to fantasize has to be properly regulated and channelled. Children imagine and fantasize even at a very early age, but many times they do not know it.

We imagine and fantasize and we know it. Often, this fantasy and imagination in us is conscious and we do it deliberately, but in children it is natural and spontaneous. These imaginings and fantasies relate to their subconscious



mind. If children are taught the science of visualization, then it will help them to become aware of their own fantasies and imaginations at a very early age.

Suppose a child becomes aware like us at the age of six about his fantasies and imaginations, I think he will then be in a better condition to handle his mind or psychological faculties. Therefore, an important training which should be imparted to teachers is how to direct and fantasize the imagination of children. We have also found that many great men were aware of their imagination and fantasies during childhood. This aspect of yoga will help children develop their creative intelligence.

Another important thing that we have to take care of is the general digestive system of children. Usually, the digestive system of children is not perfect. We have problems and we know we have them. We read books and know that the digestive system is bad and we must correct it, but children don't know. Therefore, these problems should be taken care of through the practice of proper exercises. Generally, we can divide the digestive system into the gastric system and the eliminatory system. The eliminatory system in children is very faulty. This has been found by many scientists. Therefore, the yoga exercises which help in proper elimination should be taught.

The third point is relaxation. Usually we think that children have no problems and are always relaxed, but that is not true. We are grown-up people and we know about our tensions, but the problem with children is the tension arising from their deeper mind. They are not at all aware of this and because they keep on laughing, jumping and playing all the time, we assume they are the healthiest people in the family.

Most children have nightmares and many cannot sleep alone. They like to sleep with their mother. Not only that, you find that many children shout at night and make

bodily convulsions. These things go to prove that children have something in their mind which they cannot express and which you do not know about. Now, whether this problem is psychological, related to their parents or from a previous birth is something we do not understand, but it definitely proves that they have some kind of tensions. These tensions can be overcome through hatha yoga practices.

There is another important practice which has helped children indirectly. This is the practice of exposing them to certain geometrical formations called yantras. These formations have a direct effect on the archetypes of children. The archetype is a scientific matter and there is no doubt that these formations are able to give proper relaxation to the subconscious and unconscious impressions of children.

We believe that children share and carry within them the impressions of their parents. Even in modern science the DNA molecular studies have proved that the molecular structure of children carries many elements of their parents. This means that children carry our karma. They carry it through impressions. So, they have to work out our problems and for this purpose, the deeper aspects of yoga should be very carefully introduced so that they can accept it.

The last thing I want to indicate is the effect of sound. I have found that children are great admirers of music. Of course, all of us admire music, but children become one with music. You know that music has different effects on the human mind and body. It can excite, relax or completely disturb the brain and it can completely disorder your emotions. Therefore, in yoga, there is a system of mantra chanting.

Mantra chanting means chanting a sound in proper rhythm. It need not be many sounds. It can just be one

sound which children can repeat. Sometimes, the sound may not even have an ordinary meaning or significance, but when it is chanted with rhythm and melody, then it can help children to overcome their emotional conflicts which they don't really know about.

We must compare children with intelligent people who do not know about their intelligence. This is the best definition of children you can and must have. They are as intelligent as we are, as genius, capable or able to think as we are, but they do not know it. Therefore, that unawareness should be overcome. That should be the role of yoga.

Q. How can one organize their practices?

Paramahamsaji: Why don't you ask your own children? They will tell you. In France they fix the time, prepare the room, put the photographs and charts and everything. You see, they should want to practise, not you. You only provide then with the opportunity, but the rest they will have to do themselves.

You have to tell them what yoga is. You must make it very clear and explicit to them, in a way they can understand. Then they will tell you when they can practise it. They will say, "We will practise at nine o'clock." Then you will have to tell them, "You had breakfast at eight o'clock; nine o'clock is too early." Then they will ask you, "How many hours should we wait?" You will say, "Three hours." They will say, "Okay, we will practise at eleven." Maybe at that hour there will be no facility, so they will say, "Three o'clock." You see, you will have to arouse the enthusiasm and initiative of your children because yoga is not an external discipline; it is an internal discipline.

Hari Om Tat Sat

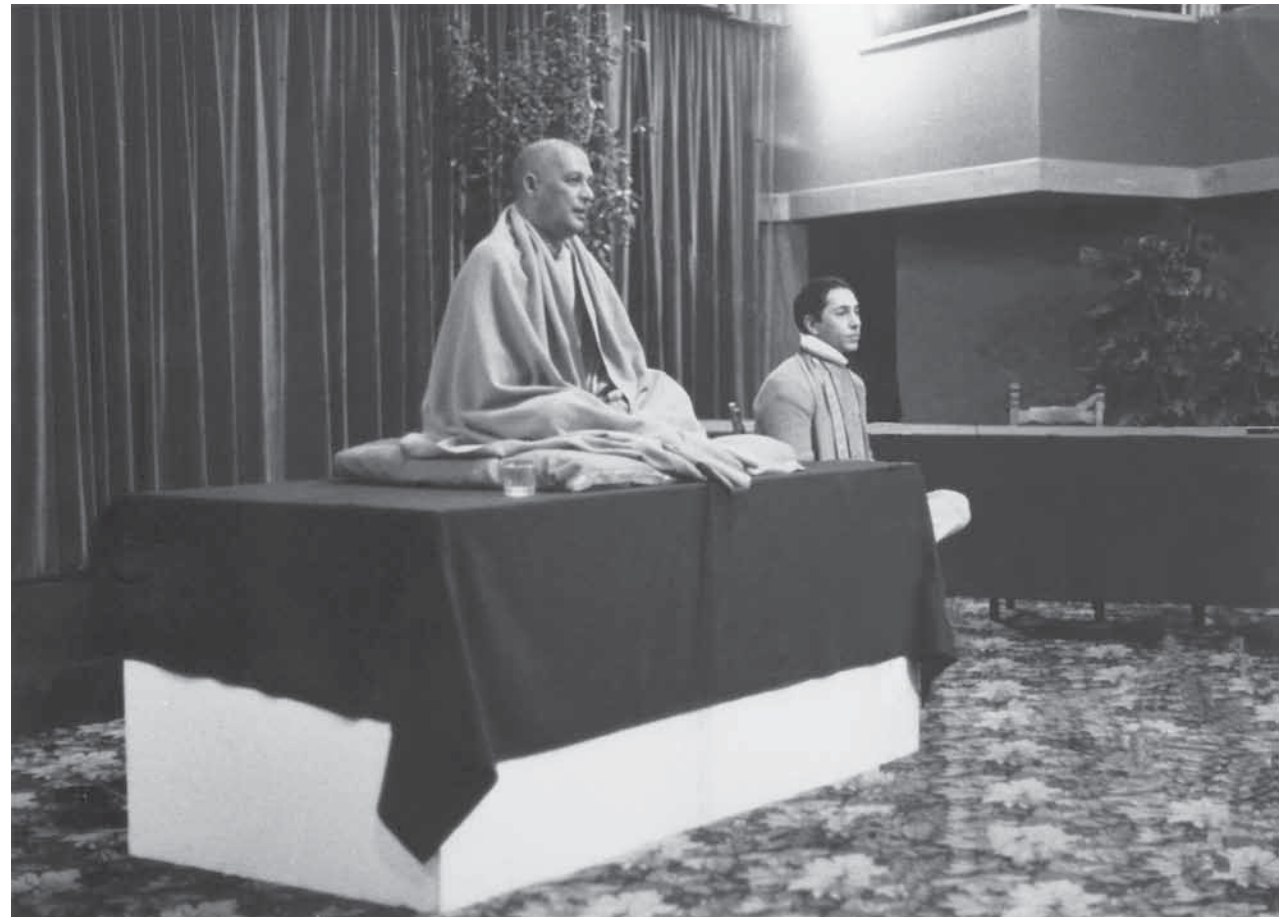
Yoga for the Modern Man

Venice, May 1984

Hari Om Tat Sat

I have been talking about yoga throughout the world for the last twenty years, and I have found the response of everybody very encouraging. There was a time when people thought that yoga was magic and mysticism and some even thought that yoga was a kind of religion or cult. However, everything seems to have undergone a great change in the last three decades. Only this afternoon I met a group of school teachers. I had a discussion with them about the possibility of yoga for children and I was surprised as to how much these teachers knew about yoga being so important for our busy children. When we teach yoga to children, we do not want to make mystics or magicians. What we do want is that their creative intelligence should operate, or if there are some abnormal traits in their personality and behaviour, they should be rectified.

In many countries, people are talking about the possible effects of yoga on retarded children, and also on handicapped people. This indicates that our civilization, our world today has become aware that there is a science with mankind called yoga which can possibly help the situation. Therefore, people have started exploring various areas like yoga and children, yoga and drug addicts, yoga and mental patients, yoga and handicapped people, yoga and criminals. Is it a panacea for all the human problems? That sounds like superstition, as if you take yoga for everything. If you have digestive problems, practise yoga. If you cannot sleep at night without sleeping pills, practise



yoga. If you are having problems with your family and children, husband, wife and friends, practise yoga. If you are angry or violent, practise yoga. Does it not sound very superstitious? Does it not sound very illogical?

It should be illogical because there is not one science in the world which can look after the welfare of everybody. Medical science is a great science, but it cannot help or protect the body. In the same way, there are many sciences in this world which can help people to a limited

extent. But why is the whole world talking about yoga in relation to every problem in human life? There is a great Christian priest in Belgium, Father Dissaman. He has written a book called *Christian Yoga*. What he says in this book is that even a Christian needs to practise yoga, and there are people in this world who believe that yoga is a very important science in everybody's life.

In this present-day world, in this twentieth century called the atomic age and nuclear age, we are undergoing

a definite situation. The situation was entirely different a hundred years ago. People had a very slow pace of life. Their desires were limited. Their social, political, psychological and emotional commitments were limited; therefore, their body, mind and emotions were not under the condition of stress. They had peace of mind. They experienced tranquillity because they lived in a different era of culture. It would not be possible for us to imagine how it used to be when our forefathers lived. Today everything is completely different and it is going to be different.

If you study the thoughts, emotions and physical structure of the people in the world today, you will find them abnormal. This is not my opinion. Consult any psychologist. Ask any medical scientist. Ask any social thinker. Ask any leader or politician. They will say just one thing, that mankind is undergoing terrible stress in the body and mind. Many great scientists have written volumes on the subject.

Stress is the condition of our century and as a result of this stress, our problems are created. These are physical problems, mental problems, emotional problems, social problems, family problems. You should not at all doubt this fact. What the great thinkers are telling you is that if you have a problem, it is through stress, and stress is a condition of the mind. Stress is a condition of man's inner nature. When the mind is educated, there is stress. When the mind is dissipated, there is stress. When the mind has no nucleus, when the mind has no centre, when the mind has no basis, then there is stress, and when you do not allow your mind to rest, there is stress.

Imagine what would happen if you do not sleep for five days. You are working for five days. You do not sit. You do not sleep. You do not rest. What will happen to your body? Have you ever thought like this about your mind? Have you ever thought that your mind also needs

a little rest, a little sleep, a little tranquillity? This is the bane of our civilization. This is the tragedy, and this is the cause of the tragedy. We teach everything to our children in schools, but we do not teach them how to give rest to the mind.

When your mind does not get rest, the problems come up. There are physical diseases. Doctors study them in medical colleges. They read about the disease and the diagnosis, etiology, pathology and all kinds of things. In the same way, the mind also suffers from disease and these mental diseases are very powerful, they can create havoc in life. These mental diseases originate when you ignore the mind.

In yoga, the first important thing is the mind and the second important thing is the life force. These are the two things which yoga talks about all the time. Remember this point and do not forget it. Yoga talks about the mind and its problems, and the second thing that yoga talks about is prana, the life force. If there is any problem with the mind or with prana, you have problems everywhere. That is why throughout the world people are talking about yoga as a panacea for all ills. Throughout the world many scientists have worked on the effects of yoga on the body and mind and found through their studies that the practices of yoga have a direct and doubtless effect on the body and the mind.

For example, one practice of yoga is known as yoga nidra. This is a practice of total relaxation. Scientists in India, the US and many countries have studied the effect of yoga nidra on the human body in cardiovascular diseases, and found stunning effects. I have conducted many experiments too. High blood pressure comes down without any difficulty by the simple practices of yoga.

However, there is one more important thing which yoga talks about. Our life has no philosophy. Maybe you

have a religion, maybe you have a cult, maybe you have a social ideology, or maybe you have a political ideology, but you have no personal philosophy. You have no philosophy which can hold and support you. Philosophy is a most important thing for man's happiness; it is something which explains why you live. Philosophy explains why you exist, why you are born, and why you die. This philosophy has to be very logical. This philosophy which will sustain life has to be mathematical. Philosophy does not exist on faith or belief. Philosophy is not your and my personal whim. It has to be something which is the outcome of a long search of wise men.

Of course we live, there is no doubt that we live, and we live better than animals do, or maybe not. We cannot say whether we live better than animals. If you look at the quantum of frustration, dejection and unhappiness, perhaps we are not better. If you look at the law and order in animal life, their agreement with the laws of nature, they are far better than us. Man has broken the laws of nature. Animals do not break it. Man has broken the laws of nature, and therefore he has broken the laws of the divine. Animals have obeyed the laws of nature, and therefore they obey the commands of the divine. If this could be the basis of comparison, then you understand where you are. The first law of nature which we have broken is the knowledge of our own selves in relation to the whole universe. It is very simple to understand.

You live in Italy, I live in India. You have to realize your relationship with your country, and I have to realize my relationship with the country I live in. If you do not realize this and if I do not realize that, then we are breaking the laws. You understand what I mean? This is an example.

You live in the universe, and you do not know how to relate with it. You do not know how to associate, how to identify with the whole universe of which you are a part.

You have your demands, you have your needs. You have to work in a factory, in an office. You have to earn money and look after your children and family, but is that the only purpose for which you exist? Is that the only aim, is that the only objective for which you are born?

Once you confront this problem, yoga begins. Once you understand that you are a part of the whole universe, that you are a microcosmic unit of the macrocosmic reality, yoga begins. Then, you are not isolated, but you are a part of the whole. Now you have to realize another thing. You are the microcosmic replica of the macrocosmic existence. Just as the whole solar system is represented in an atom, in the same way, the whole universe is represented in me. Not only in me, but every speck of this creation is the universe itself.

When our mind is extroverted, it is divided and empirical. When our mind is divided, it can see only a part of the universe and not the whole of the universe, because our consciousness is limited, our mind is limited. We cannot comprehend the whole universe, the whole cosmos, the whole reality. That is why we do not see the universe in every speck.

Analyze an atom, a molecule, electrons, light, light waves and light particles. You will be surprised that each and every particle in an atom represents the whole fantastic creation. So, how can we see the whole truth, the whole universe with this mind here and now and in me? Am I just this body, or am I more than the body? Is this mind final or is there something beyond this mind? Is this life ultimate, or is there something beyond this life? What is beyond body? What is beyond mind? What is beyond intellect? What is your ego? Ah, that is the way yoga teaches you.

It is only through yoga that you will be able to enter into the depths of your own personality. Through the





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mind you cannot understand everything. You will have to reconstruct the mind. The mind is so gross. It can only understand empirical things. It can only understand gross things. It cannot understand subtle things. Therefore, the mind has to be atomized. The mind has to be reduced to the point of an atom. The mind which can conceive external things should conceive the internal thing, and this can be done emphatically through the practices of yoga.

However, yoga is not just a science which asks you to close the eyes. It has many branches related to man's internal and external existence, and it does not immediately take you beyond. There is one level of yoga which is down to earth, practical, like hatha yoga. It talks about the body. It talks about the prana. It teaches you postures, it corrects your nervous system, it balances your endocrine secretions, it purifies the body and balances the metabolism, anabolism and catabolism. It is so practical. Why? Yoga is not an abstract science. It is a concrete science. It knows that unless your body is purified, your nervous systems are under control and your pranas are functioning well, you cannot think properly. At the same time, yoga talks about the mind and its various stages, and then it teaches the most wonderful science of meditation.

The science of meditation in yoga is a unique science. It is through the practice of meditation that you can atomize the mind. In the modern physics of Einstein, Newton, Max Planck, Eddington, they talk about time and space. What is time and what is space? Time and space are the factors responsible for your experience in everyday life. When you sit for meditation and try to concentrate your mind on one object, on one point, then time and space reach towards each other and come closer. In the deeper stages of meditation, you are able to bring time and space very, very close, and at that time you have the experience.

Now, this is the philosophy of yoga, and everyone who wants to have a fuller life must accept it. This philosophy of yoga can give you a purpose, a meaning, a definition and explanation about yourself. Many times we are frustrated. We do not know what we are doing. We do not know where we are going. These questions must have come to you at some time in your life. Of course when you are in the fever of sensual life, these ideas may not come.

There are very precious moments in human life when these thoughts do come. You want to understand the purpose of the whole drama, but you get no answer, and whatever answer you get from books is not logical. It is not mathematical, it is too transcendental, too difficult, and sometimes for people like me it is too religious, because I want to experience the truth myself. If it is in me, I will experience it. Therefore, yoga is a panacea in our day to day life.

Now, there is another important point which I am going to tell you about: the awakening of the potential of our generation. Our generation depends on the mind and the intellect, and that is why we make so many mistakes. There is another power in man which is yet untapped. This hidden power, this untapped power, whatever you might call it, is in everybody. It is not the power of the mind. It is not the power of the intellect. It is not a logical power at all. It is the power of man's superconscious, higher mind or atma. That is the power which man has to generate in himself.

Everybody can do it. A householder can do it. A man or a woman can do it. A Hindu or a Christian can do it, a Gnostic or an agnostic can do it. A saint and a criminal can do it. It is in everybody. It is Shakti; it is energy; it is higher consciousness. Find out where it is, whether it is in the brain or in the heart, in your knees, is it in the body or outside the body?

Where is the nucleus in an atom, and where is the Shakti in man? I have put two questions, you remember this. Where is the nucleus in an atom, and where is the Shakti in man? The way the nucleus has been separated, in the same way Shakti has to be separated. How is nuclear energy released? How does a scientist liberate nuclear energy in the lab? In the same way you release Shakti in you, in this lab, the body.

Sit down for meditation every day, minimum ten minutes. Fix for yourself a point, any point you like, and concentrate your mind on that point. Bring about the state of fusion when all the energies of the mind, when the entire consciousness comes to one point, it is centralized on one point. That is called fusion. It is difficult to bring all the energies of the mind to one point. You cannot do it. For that purpose, you have definite techniques of yoga. If your mind is agitated, there are techniques of yoga. If you are not able to concentrate your mind in spite of your practices, in spite of your exercise, there are powerful techniques.

When your mental energy is focused on one point and becomes a point, then something happens. What happens when the whole mind becomes one-pointed? Have you ever thought about it? When your mind returns from outside, when your mind retreats from the external perception for ten minutes. I am not talking about twenty-four hours, just for ten minutes. No, five minutes. Sorry, one minute. Still I am sorry, one second. Oh, that is too much, a split second. Even for a split second, if your mind can retreat from the external perceptions, something happens. What happens? An atomic explosion.

When scientists caused this fusion in the lab, nuclear explosion took place. Scientists have done the same thing in their lab which the yogi does in his mind. Fusion and fission; I hope you understand. If not, please read the

books on physics and atomic explosion. When the mind retreats for a split second from the external experiences, then something happens.

In all the books of yoga, experiences of many people have been given. In the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* it is written (11:12):

If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once in the sky, that would be the splendour of that mighty Being.

That is the experience of a man who has created a single point of his mind. That is called the explosion of inner energy, as if thousands and thousands of suns have been shining in the sky, the brilliance and lustre of that light is the experience when the mind becomes totally one-pointed.

If, for this experience, I ask you to devote some time every day, am I doing something wrong, am I asking too much? I do not think so. Ten minutes is nothing in twenty-four hours. How many ten minutes we have wasted! We do not even keep an account. This will be your dedication to your life, these are ten minutes that you are spending for yourself. This will be the only time which you are using for yourself. Otherwise, twenty-three hours and fifty minutes, you are running like a lunatic. You do not know what you are doing.

Logically, you cannot convince yourself about the way you are living. Oh, arrogantly you can, of course. If you are arrogant, you can say, I want to do this for this and for that. Sincerely speaking, you cannot establish the justification of your actions.

Of course there are initial problems in attaining one-pointedness of mind, and they are minor problems: how to sit, the body pains; how to concentrate, the mind does not cooperate; how to keep the body in a fit and straight



condition, the spine is very weak; if you meditate, you begin to fall asleep. If you meditate, you begin to see the bioscope. If you meditate, you get nightmares, or become very violent and angry, very passionate. These are the practical problems which you will have to crush through the little techniques of yoga.

I am very glad to be here this evening. Of course, Venice is a place which everybody in the world likes to see. I am especially happy to see all of you here, and I am also aware that in this part, all around Venice, and in all these places, there are many people who are yoga-oriented. I came here in 1968 as a tourist and this time I have come here just for two days. I was in a seminar in Il Ciocco and I have a visa to enter France on the 30th. So, I thought it is much better to go to Venice and meet people here and I hope that whatever I have said will be positive for your mind because whatever I have spoken to you on behalf of yoga, I have spoken on your behalf also.

Thanks to the organizers and thanks to you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat

Satsang

Venice, May 1984

Q. How should I use the mantra and the symbol you have given me?

Paramahansaji: Mantra is the link between you and your transcendental man. In the life of a spiritual aspirant, there are three important things which have to be kept in mind. He has to form a link with the three aspects of his existence. The first aspect of his existence is this external man. He is called the empirical man. He is also called the mortal man. The second aspect of his existence is the transcendental man. He is called immortal. Some call him atma. Some call him God. I call him the transcendental man. That is your highest nature.

In between the external man and the transcendental man, there is a middle man. Just as between this electrical bulb and the power station there is a transformer station somewhere in between. When the high tension energy line comes from the power house, it is transformed to low tension for household use. This transformer is called the middle man. This middle man is the guru. He gives you a mantra. He also ordains you with a symbol, and maybe he teaches you something else as well.

In order to forge a link between the external man, the middle man and the transcendental man, some practices should be done every day. In one day there are twenty-four hours. Out of the twenty-four hours, we sleep about eight hours. We work for eight hours and for the other eight hours we do something else. All the time we are linked with the external man. Never are we aware of the transcendental man and the middle man. Therefore, we should first start with ten minutes. Out of twenty-

four hours, set apart just ten minutes and during that period try to forge a link with the middle man and the transcendental man.

Out of all the techniques, the technique of mantra, the technique of japa yoga is considered to be the easiest and best. Sometimes, if you are not able to do it, you should at least sit for one or two or three minutes, but maintain regularity, because in japa yoga and in yoga, regularity is of paramount importance. In fact, in anything, regularity is the best and greatest of all virtues. Regularity must be maintained throughout life.

The first important thing for japa yoga is the posture. The postures are indicated in hatha yoga and in raja yoga also. The posture which you adopt should be comfortable, so that you can be stable. Some people are able to sit in the lotus posture, padmasana, or in siddhasana. If that is not possible for you, then practise sukhasana, the easy posture. If you are not able to practise any of these postures because of some physical difficulties, then you can sit on a chair. It is better to practise a few asanas and pranayama before japa yoga, but it is not compulsory; it is better.

When you have established yourself in the posture, then close your eyes. Even after you close your eyes, your eyeballs keep on making movements. This rapid eyeball movement affects the brain, and due to the eyeball movement, concentration becomes a little difficult. Therefore, after closing the eyes, you must fix your inner gaze at one of the three points. One of these three points must be decided by you. One centre is in the heart, another at the tip of the nose, and the third in the middle of the eyebrow.

When you have fixed your gaze in one of these three centres, then you can start the chanting of *Om*. The minimum chanting of *Om* is three times and the maximum should be eleven. You should fix either three or eleven,

according to the time available to you. The chanting of *Om* creates a vibration, gives peace of mind and manifests the universal mind.

Now you can start practising your mantra. You can practise it with a mala or with the natural breath, or you can practise it by singing or chanting. For a beginner, the use of a mala is necessary, but later you can use your natural breath in the form of ajapa japa.

When you are practising mantra, you must remember that you should not be tense. If your mind cooperates, it is well and good, but if the mind does not cooperate, you should not mind it at all. It is very difficult to control the mind. You must listen to me carefully. Everything in this life is an illusion. A man can do everything, but controlling the mind is the most difficult and perhaps the last of man's accomplishments. It is not only the conscious mind which you have to control, it is not only thoughts you have to control; you have to control the subconscious mind too. You must control the unconscious mind as well, but of course, by and by. When you are able to control the conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind, then you are a yogi.

Now you understand what is the definition of a yogi? One who has control over the whole mind is a yogi. What is mind? According to yoga, there are three stages of mind. According to modern psychology also, there are three stages of mind. In yoga, the stages are described as the gross mind, astral mind and causal mind. In modern psychology, they say conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind. Therefore, when you are practising mantra, you are trying to have control over all the aspects of the human mind.

First, when you are practising mantra, many thoughts will come into your mind, and sometimes you may be discouraged. Many people give up their mantra. They say,

“When I do mantra, my thoughts become wilder. When I do not do mantra, my mind is tranquil. Therefore, why should I practise mantra if my mind becomes agitated?” You must remember one important thing. Mantra is like a catalyst, it stimulates your karma. It explodes your impressions and suppressions. It expresses your samskaras, the seeds of existence. Just as when you take a purgo-laxative, you go to the toilet a number of times and your stomach becomes clearer and clearer, in the same way, when you take mantra, all your thoughts that are suppressed, repressed and buried in the mind begin to come out.

So, initially, when you are practising mantra, you should not expect concentration. You must expect this process of purging. You are Christians, you know what is purgatory – where you purge your karma. How do you purge your karma? With the nose? No. You purge your karma by thought. Sometimes they come out with a very great force. You are practising your mantra, *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namah Shivaya* . . . and the mind is becoming wild. You get discouraged and say, “Why do I do it? The mantra is not working, so I will change my mantra. That TM mantra did not work, now I will take Swami Satyananda’s mantra.”

You do not know what the significance of mantra is. Mantra gives tranquillity after removing impurity. It is not a sleeping pill. It is not a sedative. It is not as if you take *Om Namah Shivaya* and snore. The first act of mantra is purification. What is purification? Try to understand. When you go to the toilet, that is called purification. When you vomit, that is purification. If you are constipated, you are not pure. If you are constipated for one, two or three days, it means you are not pure. So, what do you do? You take a pill. If you do not take a pill, then there will be stomach ache, lack of appetite, bad wind, drowsiness, laziness. That is the effect of impure stuff.



In the same way, what is the effect of an impure mind? Well, you experience it every day: jealousy, anger, greed, all these things. These are caused by an impure mind. What is the definition of impure mind? The mind which is constipated, which is full of karma, which is full of samskaras, which is suppressed and repressed, is an impure mind.

Japa yoga is the first stage in purification. What is the literal meaning of mantra? *Mantra* is a Sanskrit term which means, “By the repetition of which the mind becomes free from sensual expressions.” This is the literal meaning. So, when you are practising mantra, you are trying to make your mind free from the impressions. Sometimes, there is very good concentration. The mind becomes one-pointed spontaneously, and then you begin to see inner forms. They are called visions.

This is the practice of mantra yoga. It is intended for everybody, but there are higher forms of mantra yoga. That can be done later on, not now. When you have been able to concentrate your mind, then you start the other practices. The moment the mind achieves concentration, there are some symptoms. There are two symptoms. The first symptom is inner vision; psychic experiences. The second symptom is sleeping while doing japa. These are the two symptoms which indicate that the concentration is growing. These two symptoms indicate that your mind is now going in the astral plane, and that means you can now undertake the higher forms of mantra yoga.

In the higher form of mantra yoga, you do japa in one of the chakras. For example, you concentrate on mooladhara chakra and feel the vibration of the mantra there. Do that for a few days, then practise in swadhisthana chakra. Do it for a few days, then practise it in the other chakras. You practise this higher form of mantra yoga according to the order of the chakras: mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna, bindu, sahasrara. In

each chakra, you can practise, say, for about a month or even more, and when you have finished the round, again start from the bottom and I assure you that it will not be necessary for you to repeat the practice.

The seat of kundalini shakti is in mooladhara chakra, but it is not necessary that everybody's kundalini shakti is in mooladhara. According to the evolution of your spiritual life in many past lives, maybe some of you and some of us have already awakened the kundalini and it might be somewhere on the way. However, this is the sadhana for all. The practice should start with mooladhara chakra and you will find that during the course of the practice, you will get fantastic experiences in some chakra because your evolution has already gone ahead to swadhisthana chakra, or to manipura chakra, or to anahata chakra.

The great artists, the great painters and musicians, their kundalini is not in mooladhara. It is in anahata. The great artist, Michelangelo, where was his kundalini? In mooladhara chakra? No. Maybe in a previous life, but in this life it was in anahata chakra. By his sadhana or practice, whatever he did in this life, his kundalini must have gone a little further to vishuddhi chakra. In the next incarnation, it will be in vishuddhi chakra and not in anahata chakra. Therefore, you must try your mantra in each and every chakra, but do not be in a hurry. Do not suppose that your kundalini is in manipura chakra. Give plenty of time to mantra yoga and mala, with the breath, by chanting. You can chant your mantra and then take plenty of time in mooladhara chakra. When you are practising your mantra in mooladhara chakra, you must feel mooladhara chakra as clearly as you feel your body here.

By the practice of mantra as I am telling you, you can achieve a great faculty, which in raja yoga is called sanyam. *Sanyam* means concentration, meditation and samadhi at the same time. They do not come one

after the other. They all come together and therefore I am telling that when you are practising your mantra in mooladhara chakra, you must feel the mooladhara chakra or swadhisthana chakra as clearly as you feel your body. If you feel your mooladhara chakra or swadhisthana chakra tangibly, that means you have achieved sanyam. Sanyam is a great faculty of a yogi. If you want to know more about sanyam, you should read the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali.

Now, this much about japa yoga. You must keep your mantra personal. You must keep it properly in your mind. Once a year, you must retire for one day. Go to a secluded place, practise the mantra from morning till evening, with a few breaks for lunch, rest and dinner. On that day you must observe silence. Practise it with mala, two hours, three hours, four hours, five hours, six, seven, eight, nine, ten hours; only one day in a year. This will give you a push in your spiritual life.

Q. What is the difference between a karma sannyasin and a sannyasin?

Paramahamsaji: A karma sannyasin is a regular householder. He has wife and children. He has a business and his problems, but he has a philosophical mind. He has a higher mind. He tries to understand his relationship with everything, and he believes that this life, this body has been given to him for spiritual experience. Family, money, children, work, death, they are the products of one's karma. That is not the goal, that is not the purpose for which he is born. When a householder begins to rethink the aim of life, and when he decides, feels, realizes or discovers the aim of life is spiritual experience, then he is a karma sannyasin. Then he goes to a guru in whom he has confidence, and the guru gives him a set of spiritual practices according

to his limitations as a householder. He lives the life of a householder with discipline, with wisdom and with proper understanding. His relationship with everything in this world is not anarchical. The guru gives him one set of robes for his sadhana which he wears only when he is doing spiritual practice. He does not use it as a civilian's dress. That is karma sannyasa.

A sannyasin is one who has renounced his personal life. He has no personal wealth. He has no personal relationships. He is one with the cosmos. He lives freely, completely free. He belongs to nobody. He does not entertain desires in his mind. He performs every karma in order to help the evolution of mankind. He shaves his head, not every day, but sometimes. He wears the geru robe which is the colour of inner awakening and he tries to remain as alone as possible.

So, this is a brief explanation of a sannyasin and a karma sannyasin. The path of sannyasa and the path of karma sannyasa, they reach the same point. A sannyasin reaches that goal by renouncing desires. A karma sannyasin reaches there by understanding the desires, and both, a karma sannyasin and a sannyasin, are spiritual seekers on the path.

Q. How to overcome insecurity?

Paramahansa ji: Insecurity is a part of man's existence, and every person lives with it. Food, sleep, insecurity and the sex instinct are natural for everyone. In order to overcome the effects of insecurity, you will have to discover a mathematical philosophy.

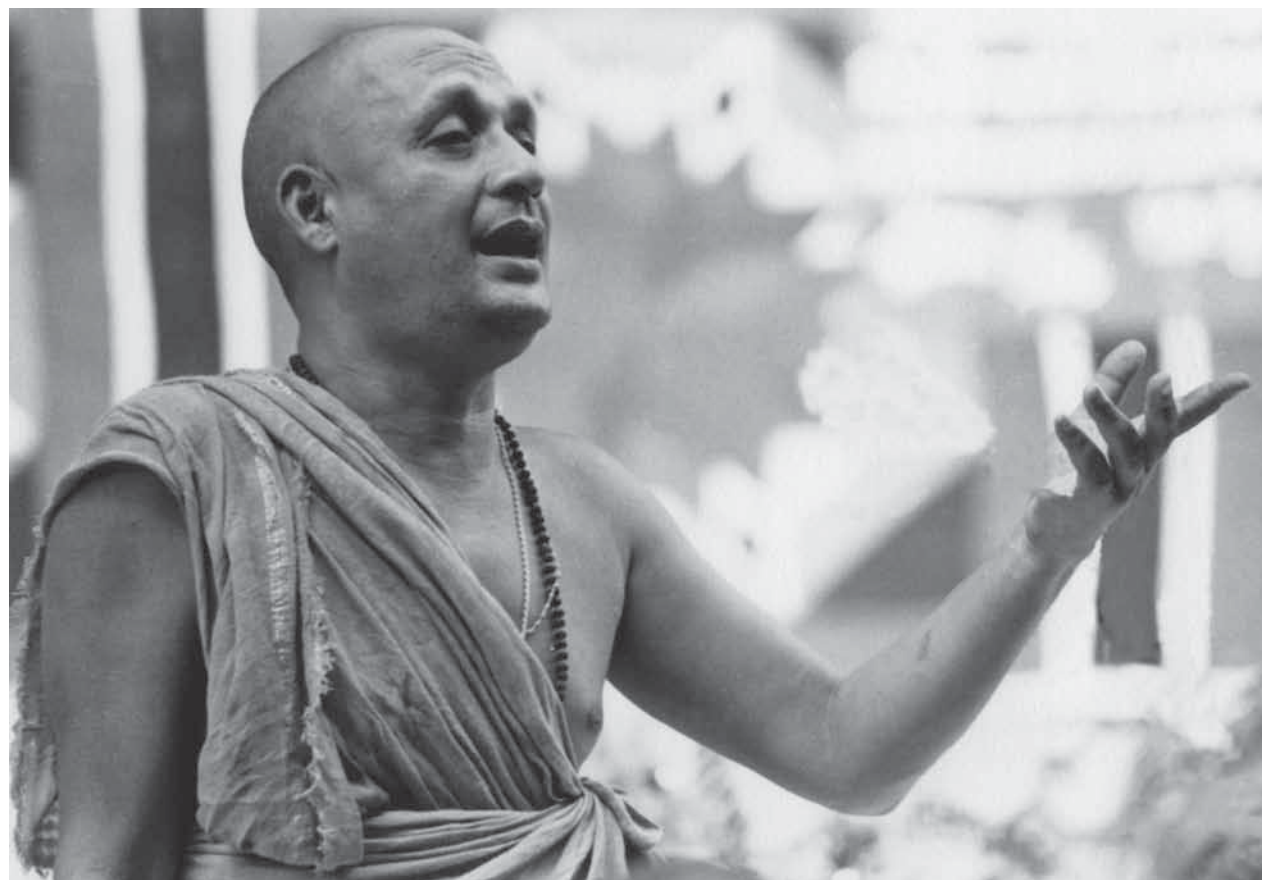
By a mathematical philosophy I mean a philosophy which is absolutely logical and scientific, because sometimes a philosophy is more like one's faith and belief. However, sometimes philosophy is born out of man's logical understanding. Why should you feel insecure? You

are always in danger. Even before you were born, you were in danger. This little earth is evolving all the time. If any big heavenly body or comet comes close to it, you are finished. If a volcano erupts at any time next to your village, you will be burnt.

There is a higher nature. That nature has certain laws which control the mobile, immobile, sentient and insentient creatures. We are all a part of that chain of law. Therefore, our fears, our phobias, our insecurities are not true, not real.

Secondly, this insecurity which we in the modern world are suffering from is on account of a broken family system. I am not going to speak a lot about this. You know much better than I do. There are also other reasons for insecurity. The physiological imbalances of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and endocrinal imbalance are also cause of phobia and insecurity.

However, the important causes of insecurity are two. Please understand this very carefully. One cause





of insecurity is to believe that you die with death. You die, finished, no more. That is one cause of insecurity. If you can discover the immortality of consciousness, not the immortality of the body, then your insecurity will be cured by fifty percent, because man lives on hope. If I die tomorrow, my God – fear!

If I die tomorrow, in thirteen days I will be born again. I will enjoy again, as simple as that. You have a house, you live there. The owner of the house asks you to get out, but in Italy, or in your country, there is a shortage of houses. You cannot get any house. Therefore, you will have insecurity. “Where will I live? No house is possible, all houses are booked. Oh, I will be on the road.” This is exactly the cause of insecurity.

The second and most important cause of insecurity is the lack of understanding that the reality is in you. God is immanent and transcendent. Transcendent means beyond; beyond body, beyond mind, beyond ego, beyond this, beyond that, beyond time, beyond space, beyond everything. However, if you think that God is only transcendent, then you will have a problem. God is also immanent. Immanent means He is in each and every speck of creation. He is in water. He is in earth. He is in sky. He is in the trees and the flowers. He is in me. He is in the baby. He is in a sinner. He is in a saint. He is in the temple, and he is in the pub. There is no place where He is not.

Just like the air, He permeates each and everything in this world. Like air, and even more than air, He permeates

each and everything. So, in order to overcome the fears, phobias and insecurity, you have to discover who you are. If you are a bundle of bones, flesh, intestines, cartilage and nerves, then there is reason for insecurity, but if you are that transcendental entity, then why to fear? “I and my Father are one,” this is what Christ said in the Bible. You can read it again and again if you do not believe me. It means ‘I’ and ‘You’ are one. That means the immanent reality and the transcendental reality are not two realities, they are one reality. Only then can you realize the source of fearlessness. When you have a piece of gold, you give it to a jeweller to make a bangle. He gives back the bangle; he does not give you that gold. So you have lost the gold, is it not so? You may cry, “I have lost my gold”, and fight with the goldsmith, “Where is my gold? I gave you one biscuit of gold!” He will say, “Idiot, the bracelet is gold!” Then you will stop crying and fighting. Therefore, in order to overcome phobias, fears and insecurities, you must discover these two philosophies.

What I am telling you is not enough. You will have to realize from within. You only know it from me intellectually. If you are convinced today, you will say, “Okay, I do not care, I do not care.” No, that will not do. You will have to realize that life is eternal, just as everything in this universe is eternal. Life is eternal. Matter is eternal. Energy is eternal. One sun dies, another sun is born. That is all. One solar system is destroyed, another solar system is born. There is only destruction of the external form. The soul of the form never dies. This you must remember; the soul of the object, the soul of the matter never dies. It is eternal.

Secondly, “I and my Father are one.” When I look in and in and in, I find the light here, and when I open my eyes, I can see the light there, and again I close my eyes, I can see the light here. Are these two lights? No, one. So,

the transcendental reality and the immanent reality both must be understood.

Q. What practice should one do to cure insomnia?

Paramahansaji: The first practice is trataka, the second is yoga nidra. These practices will relieve insomnia, but there is one thing you have to do. Where do you get insomnia? In the bed. Why? Because you think and think and think. That means you have to improve the atmosphere of your bed.

How do you improve the atmosphere of your bed? I can give you one suggestion, but other things you have to think for yourself. In your bed, you should only do two things: one, sleeping; second, mantra. Then what will happen? In a few months, you will create a mandala, you will create an area of influence in your mind. The moment you go to the bed, you will fall asleep.

When you have several thoughts in your bed, get out of the bed. Do not do it on the bed. Do not think on the bed. Get out. Sit on a chair and think. There is a place to sleep, you call it the bedroom. There is a place for eating, the dining room. There is a place to gossip, the sitting room. There is a place for evacuation, the toilet. You must maintain the discipline of each room. If you want to think, go to the sitting room. If you want to evacuate, go to the toilet; do not go to the dining room. If you want to sleep, go to the bed. You see, this is how we create discipline. It is a very minor discipline. You just have to change a little bit.

Of course, yoga nidra is very good, but it is a treatment. It is not a change. You should change the quality of the atmosphere of the bed. When people go to church, they feel different. When you go to a pub or a discotheque, you feel different. Why? Because of the atmosphere.



Therefore, not only to the person who has put the question, but to everybody I will say that your bed has only two purposes. When you are on the bed, you take your mala and practise or you can read some nice books.

By nice books I mean spiritual books, or you can do kirtan, or meditate, or chant.

Hari Om Tat Sat. Thank you very much, and I will come to you again.

Impressions...

Swami Satyananda's visit to Venice, 1984

Sn. *Brahmavidya*

In the seventies I was the owner of what today we'd call a wellness centre. During the summer I attended, in a holiday club, a yoga course held by a French teacher married to an Indian man. So I learnt the first asanas and surya namaskara, and soon felt improvements in my psychophysical state.

When I came back to Italy, in my institute, within the normal gym courses I began to insert some asanas and all the people were enthusiastic. I felt I needed to follow qualified courses; the yoga of the holidays was not enough. Therefore, when in 1983 at a centre in Venice Lido there was the first Italian RYE (Research in Yoga for Education) course, I attended it. I met Swami Satyananda, I read the first and in those days the only yoga book in Italian, *Yoga from Shore to Shore*, and a new world opened up for me . . .

In 1984, the contagious enthusiasm and devotion of Swami Anandananda was able to bring in Mestre Swami Satyananda for a conference at the Sport Building. This big space was filled with hundreds of curious and happy people who came there only by word of mouth. They all wanted to know that great teacher, one of the first teachers to come to Italy from India, come for us, to talk to us, to open the doors of a world still unknown to us . . .

There was Paramahamsaji, with his calm, quiet and smiling face, but at the same time a steady and authoritative walk. When he began to speak, the atmosphere filled with

a special energy, all hung to his words, and when, with exquisite sensibility towards the people of a Catholic country, he quoted a phrase from the Gospel, "Who see you see me, who see me see the Father", and displayed with simple but wise and deep words the wonderful concepts of divine communion, of immanence, of God in us, my heart opened up! So, yoga was not only for the body and the mind, it was for the soul too, it was a perfect and complete discipline and I, after such a long time of suffering and looking for something, had found my teacher! He seemed to be talking to me only, to have understood what I needed: a light and support I was waiting for through years and years and which do not fail ever. This is what helped me to find myself, to overcome a lot of difficulties, to give my life a sense, letting me discover a wonderful place in the Venetian hills, to build Satyam Tapovan, to dedicate to him the house and all the creative activities we carry out there.

Every breath here is dedicated to him, to the Holder of Light, to the beloved guru of many, still today more than in the past, forever.



**"I will inspire you
and that inspiration is love!"**

Swami Siddharta Saraswati

May 1984. It's my first encounter with Paramahamsaji. He is sitting in front of me, with an open smile, a firm and deep gaze, he is talking and some words enter into my being, concepts not really new, but truly they are the 'correct' ones for me at that time, offering a broad vision in life. Since then, after all the solitude of the seeker, seeking whom, seeking what, it wasn't clear then . . . for me Paramahamsaji has become the whole world, a lighthouse in the night of despair. After that encounter with Paramahamsaji the experiences of the previous period came to an end: relatives and friends staring at me with wide-open eyes, me who as usual couldn't explain myself nor could I find the exact words to tell them about my suffering, about the feeling of emptiness within, my need of always searching, incapable of resting and accepting thus the normality of life – the usual questioning from them: What really do you want? What are you looking for? Why?

Paramahamsaji became then the port where to harbour the desperate soul getting lost in the struggle of solitude. And since then – and moreover today when I'm revisiting my path – there is that unique, first, unforgettable experience of my first encounter with Paramahamsaji, thanks to which I could feel welcomed, understood and accepted. So that today my life is not only filled with words, but with practical steps to go towards that aim of which Paramahamsaji

spoke and the way for which, thanks to his example, I could get a glimpse of: giving yourself to others!

A few of Paramahamsaji's sentences keep resounding in my heart: "I will inspire you and that inspiration is love!" Through his words comes the light to brighten my steps and to show the way – sometimes easy to lose – giving significance to a life otherwise in vain. "One thousand times I fell, but one thousand times I picked myself up and every time I stood running with open arms into life . . ."

After so many years I can say that Paramahamsaji's sentences stay inside you, if required they can rebuild your whole life, giving you back a meaning when you are lost. His sentences become the stepping stones to support you during your journey along the spiritual path. His sentences foresee your tiredness and they invite you to get some rest, so you can keep going and not give up, because you cannot go back: the door behind is closed! His sentences invite you not to have many superficial aims which could only disperse your energy, but to have one aim towards which to send all your efforts – if you really want to reach your goal. His sentences trace, therefore, concretely the track to follow and they become poles supporting you step by step to your goal. "If you want . . ." as Paramahamsaji has told me sweetly on a few occasions.

Today, just a few sentences of Paramahamsaji restore my harmony and balance and, above all, they enhance my energy and motivation to continue to concretely apply his teachings and enrich my life with meaning and sweetness while trying to convey to others his words and teachings.



Tribute to Swami Satyananda

Swami Suryamurti Saraswati

When I had the good fortune to meet Swami Satyananda in Italy in 1984, I was practising yoga for some years, following Turya's courses, my beloved and esteemed teacher of yoga, responsible for Yoga Vidya Institute in Udine.

I cannot find the words to tell my impression, my emotions and sensations of that first encounter. I felt attracted like iron dust to magnet. I had the sensation that I was in front of a fount of infinite Love and infinite Wisdom. He allowed me to look inside me, to know myself and to help others.

Thanks to him, I have deepened yoga and applied it to different situations. I have spread it following one of his slogans, "Yoga from shore to shore, from door to door". I brought it into the south of Italy factories, into schools, into nursing homes and into civil society.

As a sannyasin, I had the good luck and the honour to take part in almost all the yajnas at Rikhia giving my contribution to the preparations. In January 1999, I stayed in Rikhia for two months. Paramahamsaji granted and honoured me by ordering twenty-five night tables for the clinic. Even though I am not a real carpenter, I made the tables work without trouble with the available tools. On many occasions, I have had the sensation of being close to God. My deep respect and gratitude to Paramahamsaji who allowed me:

*To see the most beautiful forms and colours,
To listen to the sounds I did not know,
To taste delicious food,
To breathe perfumes,
To meet people,
To dress clothes,
To feel peace.*

Remembering Paramahamsaji

The eternal search, the eternal union,
My beloved Guru,
So much have I desired you,
So much have I desired meeting you.
A desire, a longing, an inner search
That slowly developed in time,
Until it guided me to your encounter,
Source of profound internal joy and happiness,
Intimately real and authentic.
In the course of time the flow of energy
Has found its direction, dedicated,
Within a flow of imperishable spirituality,
Towards a purpose enlightened by the brightness of
your Wisdom and Love.
Within the eternal quest, the certainty of your
eternal presence in the flow of time
Brightens the path, supports the spirit and carries,
Like a flood,
Beyond every obstacle or incertitude.
Beloved Guru, in reading the passing of time,
It heartens the spirit the sureness
That a fine thread of light weaves our lives,
Leading us to each other
Allowing us, in our transit from density to lightness,
The eternal union towards the Light.

*At Paramahamsaji's feet,
Swami Shaktidhara Saraswati*



Development of Satyananda Yoga in Italy

1980

The event of Paramahamsaji's lectures and satsangs that he gave during the program at Numana in 1980 was the stepping stone of the establishment of Satyananda Yoga in Italy.

Paramahamsaji inspired hundreds of aspirants and yoga teachers introducing concepts and practices relating to japa, shatkarma, ajapa japa and yoga nidra.

After Paramahamsaji's departure for India, the demand for Satyananda Yoga classes by aspirants and yoga teachers in Italy increased substantially. In Torino, regular weekly classes were conducted from Monday to Thursday, and on weekends residential seminars on different topics were conducted in Torino and various cities and towns of Italy.

In December, Swami Anandananda accompanied a group of aspirants to Bihar School of Yoga in Munger for a Kriya Yoga course and satsang with Paramahamsaji.



1981

In January, regular weekly classes were conducted in different areas of Torino. Seminars and public lectures were conducted in Venice, Trieste, Milano, Rimini and Bolzano.

In March, Paramahamsaji returned to Italy to conduct lectures and seminars organized at Milano and Torino. For this occasion, the first edition of the book *Yoga Nidra* was translated and printed in Italian.

At the end of the year, a group of Italian aspirants travelled to Munger for a Kriya Yoga seminar held at Bihar School of Yoga.

1982

In February, the foundation and registration of Satyananda Ashram Italia as an Association in Torino took place. In October, the Edizioni Satyananda Ashram Italia was registered for the publication of Swami Satyananda's books in Italian.

Weekly classes were conducted in different centres, halls and schools in Torino.

Seminars, public lectures and courses were conducted in Rome, Trieste, Rimini, Venezia, Firenze, Bolzano and Urbino, in preparation for Paramahamsaji's tour of Italy in September.

In July began the free distribution of the first issue of the *Yoga* magazine in Italian with lectures and satsangs by Paramahamsaji.

In December, Swami Anandananda and a few aspirants travelled to Bihar School of Yoga in Munger for a period of ashram life.



1983

From April onwards, classes were conducted regularly in different parts of Torino with the addition of special classes for handicapped persons, which were conducted in community centres in Torino.

Residential seminars and lectures on different subjects were conducted in Rome, Bolzano, Trieste, Rimini, Pesaro and Urbino.

In December, Swami Anandananda accompanied a group of Italian aspirants to the ashram in Munger for a Kriya Yoga course.



1984

From January to September, regular classes were conducted in Torino in different halls, schools and community centres.

In October, the new Satyananda Ashram Italia centre in Torino at Corso Raffaello was inaugurated. The centre included a spacious hall, changing rooms, reception and office. All the activities of weekly classes, lectures, seminars, Teacher Training Courses, special classes for the handicapped and editing took place here.

In May, the Italian translation of the book *Dynamics of Yoga* was published.

Paramahamsaji returned to Italy to preside over programs organized at Ciocco and Venice.

Through the year, various seminars and public lectures were conducted in Torino, Trieste, Venice, Rimini, Pescara and Urbino.

A large group of Italian aspirants travelled to Bihar School of Yoga in Munger for a course on Yoga as Remedy for Different Ailments. During the course, Paramahamsaji gave satsang and initiated aspirants into mantra and karma sannyasa.

1985

Weekly classes at different times of the day and for different levels were conducted at Scuola di Yoga Satyananda Ashram Italia in Torino. A one-year Teacher Training Course began in the month of October.

Residential seminars were conducted at retreat centres in the Alps surrounding Torino and seminars on different topics were conducted in Gradisca, Trieste, Bologna, Imperia, Pesaro, Urbino and Bolzano.

During the year, the booklet *Hatha Yoga* was printed in Italian at the centre.

In December, a group of aspirants joined a course on Yoga Therapy at Ganga Darshan in Munger.



1986

Classes continued every day of the week, for beginners, intermediate and advanced students at different times of the day. Special classes for the handicapped continued both at the centre and at community centres in Torino.

In March, the second edition of the book *Yoga Nidra* was published in Italian. At the centre in Torino, lectures and residential seminars on Yoga Nidra, Hatha Yoga and Chakras were conducted during the year.

Public lectures and seminars were conducted in Mestre, Monfalcone, Montebello, Pescara and Inverigo.

1987

Regular classes and special classes for the handicapped continued and yoga nidra classes were introduced during lunch break for employees working nearby the centre.

At the centre, lectures and seminars on Yoga and Tantra in Daily Life, Ajapa Japa, Yoga and Health, Yoga Nidra, Nada Yoga and Mantra were held. The year also saw Guru Poornima celebrations with students and aspirants as well as a Teacher Training Course.



Public lectures and seminars were conducted in Gorizia on Yoga and Evolution, in Monfalcone on Hatha Yoga, in Ronchi on Chakras, in Grado on Yoga for the Awakening of Human Potential, in Gradisca on Yoga for the Management of Stress, in Trieste on Meditation, in Ancona on Application of Yoga in Daily Life, in Pesaro on Yoga Nidra and in Pescara on Introduction to Yoga.

During the year, the books *I Chakra*, *Karma Yoga* and *Surya Namaskara* were published in Italian.

At the end of the year, Swami Anandananda accompanied a group of aspirants to Ganga Darshan for courses.



1988

Throughout the year, regular classes were conducted by different yoga teachers from Monday to Friday for beginners, intermediate and advanced students. Swami Shaktidhara conducted special classes for the handicapped, both at the centre and at the national institution, ENFAS, in Torino.

The first edition of *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* was published in July.

Construction work of the ashram in Montescudo began in March and in the summer, seminars and karma yoga activities began to take place at the ashram.

At the centre in Torino, seminars were conducted on Kriya Yoga and Tattwa Shuddhi followed by the celebration of Guru Poornima; a residential Teacher Training Course was conducted in July and August at Montescudo; a seminar on Yoga for Learning and Teaching at School was conducted for school

teachers of a primary school in Torino; seminars on Nada Yoga, Meditation and Yoga for a Balanced Personality were conducted for yoga students in Torino.

Public lectures and seminars were organized and conducted in Rimini, Bari, Lecco, Ancona, Trieste, Napoli and Pescara.

At the end of the year, Swami Anandananda and Swami Shaktidhara accompanied a group of aspirants to Ganga Darshan in Munger.

1989

This year, the hall at the centre was extended and new space for office and cooking facilities were added. Weekly classes increased to five classes per day from Monday to Friday. Special classes for the handicapped were conducted by Swami Shaktidhara for two groups, both at the centre and at the headquarters of ENFAS.

Regular weekly classes and residential seminars were conducted also in Montescudo from March onwards.

Public lectures and seminars were offered in Rimini, Gradisca, Como, Pavia, Mestre, Mompellato and Santena.

The book *Il Mantra* was published in May and *Yoga and Children* was published in November.



1990

With the extension of the centre, more students could be accommodated for classes and for seminars. Public lectures and seminars on Yoga for Psychosomatic Disease, Yoga at School, Yoga Therapy and Yoga to Alleviate Asthma were conducted in Torino, while at the ashram in Montescudo seminars on Kriya Yoga, Nada Yoga, intensive sadhana and sadhana shivir and Guru Poornima celebrations were conducted.

In December, several aspirants and yoga teachers from Italy travelled to Munger for courses and satsangs.

1991

This year, the activities at the ashram in Montescudo increased regularly. Weekly classes and residential seminars were conducted on Hatha Yoga, Mantra, Yoga Nidra, Pranayama and Antar Mouna. A Teacher Training Course, Guru Poornima Sadhana Shivar and an In-service Training for yoga teachers were also held.

At the centre in Torino, besides regular weekly classes, several lectures and seminars were conducted on Yoga in Modern Life, Yoga to Alleviate Stress and Yoga at School.

Public lectures and seminars were organized and conducted in Gradisca, Bologna and Modena.

In winter, a group of aspirants and yoga teachers visited Ganga Darshan in Munger.



1992

Activities of weekly classes, lectures and seminars were conducted both at Torino and at the ashram in Montescudo.

In June, the second edition of the books *I Chakra* and *Il Mantra* and the first edition of *Satsang with Swami Niranjan* were published.

Swamis Anandananda and Shaktidhara joined the six-month Sannyasa Training Course held at Ganga Darshan in Munger.

1993

In 1993, all classes at Torino and Montescudo continued regularly.

In March, Swami Anandananda and Swami Shaktidhara returned from Ganga Darshan, and programs of lectures and seminars resumed in both centres.

Lectures and seminars were also conducted in Cormons, Bolzano, Trieste and Trento.

A group of 75 aspirants and yoga teachers participated in the Silver Jubilee program held at Munger.

1994

This year, besides the regular activities, Satyananda Ashram Italia organized Swami Niranjan's visit to Italy. During the visit, Swami Niranjan presided over a public lecture in Torino at the Colosseo Theater where 700 delegates attended his lecture. On the following day, a program of satsang and initiation was held at the centre in Torino. Swamiji then travelled by car to Rimini where he presided over a seminar attended by 300 delegates from all over Italy. Following this, he conducted a havan at the ashram in Montescudo and had a meeting with Italian yoga teachers.

Swamiji was then accompanied to Florence where he gave satsang at the Satyananda Centre of Florence.

On the occasion of Swami Niranjan's visit, Satyananda Ashram Italia published the book *Kundalini Tantra* in Italian.

In November, a large group from Italy travelled to India to attend programs at Ganga Darshan in Munger.





1995

In 1995, the activities of classes, lectures, seminars, Teacher Training Course and In-service Training continued at the centre in Torino and at the ashram in Montescudo.

Public lectures followed by seminars were organized and conducted in Udine, Cormons, Macerata, Trento, Bolzano and Molfetta.

At the end of the year, aspirants and yoga teachers from Italy attended the Sita Kalyanam program held in Rikhia and then visited Ganga Darshan in Munger.

1996

In 1996, regular weekly classes continued in Torino and Montescudo. Residential seminars on Sadhana for the Chakras, Antar Mouna, Ajapa Japa, Pranayama and Prana Vidya, Chakra Shuddhi, Yoga for Women and Yoga Therapy were held. A children's yoga camp, a Teacher Training Course, an In-service Training for yoga teachers and Guru Poornima celebrations were organized and conducted in Torino and Montescudo.

Public lectures followed by seminars were conducted in Milano, Bolzano, Chieri, Trieste, Pesaro, Ancona and Venice.

In December, Swami Anandananda and Swami Shaktidhara accompanied a group of aspirants to Rikhia and Munger.



1997

This year, besides regular weekly classes, several programs on Yoga and Education, Yoga for Children, Yoga at School and Yoga for School Teachers were organized and conducted at the centre in Torino and at the ashram in Montescudo.

The booklet *Yoga il Dono della Pace* with Swami Niranjan's talks and satsangs in Italy was published in Italian along with the second edition of *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*.

A Teacher Training Course and In-service Training were conducted at the ashram besides residential seminars on Kriya Yoga, Nada Yoga, Mantra and Kirtan, and sadhana retreats.

Public lectures and seminars were conducted in Bolzano, Recanati, Pesaro, Trieste, Milano, Bari and Molfetta.

In November, aspirants and yoga teachers from Italy attended programs in Rikhia and Munger.



1998

As a result of the previous year's programs on Yoga and Education raising a lot of interest among yoga teachers and school teachers, more seminars were organized on the same topic with the participation of yoga teachers from Italy and other European countries who specialized in this field.

Specific courses were conducted on Mantra, Nada Yoga, Kirtan, Yoga Nidra, Meditation and Kriya Yoga along with Teacher Training Courses.

Public lectures and seminars were conducted in Bolzano, Macerata, Cormons, Savona, Recanati, Rimini, Pesaro, Bologna, Milano and Venezia.

The second editions of the books *Surya Namaskara* and *Il Mantra* were published in Italian.

At the end of the year, a group of Italian aspirants attended the programs organized in Rikhia and Ganga Darshan.

1999

Regular weekly classes continued in Torino and Montescudo. Several seminars conducted by yoga teachers and swamis of the Satyananda Yoga tradition were organized and conducted at both places.

Specific training for Yoga and Education and Yoga at School was also given.

Seminars and retreats were conducted at the ashram in Montescudo for advanced students, and seminars on different aspects and techniques of yoga were conducted for beginners.

The book *Tattwa Shuddhi* was published in Italian.

Public lectures followed by seminars were conducted in Gorizia, Grado, Trieste, Napoli, Venice, Milano, Bologna, Rimini and Rome.

In November and December, Italian aspirants participated in the events organized at Rikhia and Ganga Darshan.



2000

In 2000, Satyananda Ashram Italia joined other yoga institutions of Italy in a federation recognized by the Ministry of Education for introducing yoga in Italian schools. As a result, several yoga teachers from the centre in Torino were engaged in conducting yoga courses at four schools in the Torino area. Specific seminars were also organized for school teachers and for parents at local schools and community centres.

Specific events were organized to contribute to Sivananda Math's activities.

As classes were conducted in Torino and Montescudo, different seminars for advanced, intermediate and beginners were held.

Sadhana retreats, Teacher Training Course, Guru Poornima celebration and courses on Nada Yoga, Tattwa Shuddhi, Yantra Drawing, Ajapa Japa, Antar Mouna and Hridayakasha Dharana were conducted on a residential basis at the ashram in Montescudo.

Seminars were also conducted in Recanati, Trieste, Cormons, Trento and Venice.

Italian aspirants, students and yoga teachers attended the yajna in Rikhia and satsangs at Ganga Darshan.



2001

In 2001, Swami Anandananda and Swami Shaktidhara handed over the centre in Torino to a group of local yoga teachers, so that the ashram in Montescudo could be developed further including the possibility of ashram life for resident sannyasins, aspirants, students and yoga teachers.

Specific seminars and training of teachers in the field of yoga and education continued with the participation of expert teachers from Italy and Europe.

Seminars on Yoga for Women and Yoga in Pregnancy were also conducted in Torino and Montescudo. Residential seminars on yoga sadhana including Kriya Yoga, Tattwa Shuddhi, Exploring the Five Pranas, Chakras, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and Nada Yoga were held and Guru Poornima celebrations were conducted in Montescudo.

Specific seminars on Yoga for Rehabilitation from Drugs Addiction were organized and conducted at the ashram with the support of other swamis from Europe.

The books *Yoga and Stress Management* and *Yoga Nidra* were published in Italian.

In November, a group of aspirants travelled to India to attend the Sita Kalyanam program in Rikhia and satsang at Ganga Darshan.

2002

Regular weekly classes were conducted at Montescudo for students coming from Rimini, San Marino, Cesena and surrounding villages.

Weekend seminars on Antar Mouna, Raja Yoga, Mantra Chanting, Ajapa Japa, Kriya Yoga as well as a Teacher Training Course, In-service Training and Guru Poornima celebrations were organized and conducted at the ashram.

Periods of ashram life for aspirants, students and yoga teachers were regularly organized.

The new edition of *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* was published in Italian.

Public lectures followed by seminars were conducted in Mestre, Recanati, Torino and South Italy.

At the end of the year, Italian aspirants attended programs in Rikhia and Ganga Darshan.



2003

Regular weekly classes continued throughout the year at the ashram including early morning classes. Residential seminars on various topics and ashram life periods were organized and conducted regularly. A Teacher Training Course and In-service Training for yoga teachers were organized and conducted at the ashram.

The books *Application of Yoga for Common Diseases* and *Prana, Pranayama and Prana Vidya* were published in Italian.

Public lectures and seminars were organized and conducted in Mestre, Venice, Trieste, Torino, Recanati and Bologna.

A Kriya Yoga course was conducted by Swami Anandananda at the end of the year in Rikhia, followed by a visit to Ganga Darshan, in which 25 Italian students participated.

2004

In 2004, activities of weekly classes and residential seminars were organized and conducted at the ashram in Montescudo.

The book *La Visione dello Yoga* containing lectures and satsangs by Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjana was published in Italian.

Celebration of Guru Poornima and a sadhana retreat was organized and attended



by aspirants, students and yoga teachers, while a group of aspirants accompanied by Swami Anandananda travelled to Rikhia to attend Guru Poornima celebrations and visited Ganga Darshan.

Training of yoga teachers and In-service Training seminars were conducted at the ashram.

Public lectures and seminars were held in Torino, Rimini, Bari, Trieste and Venice.

At the end of the year, a group travelled to India to attend the Sat Chandi Mahayajna in Rikhia and satsang at Ganga Darshan.

2005

In 2005, the activities of weekly classes, lectures and seminars continued at the ashram in Montescudo.

The second edition of the book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* was released in Italian.

Residential programs of seminars on different topics and ashram life were conducted during the year. Teacher Training and updating courses for yoga teachers were also conducted.

Guru Poornima was celebrated with the participation of several aspirants from all over Italy.

Aspirants, students, yoga teachers and devotees attended the Sat Chandi Mahayajna in Rikhia and satsang at Ganga Darshan.

2006

The main event in 2006 was the presence of Swami Niranjan at the International Satyananda Yoga Festival held at Lido di Venezia from 19th to 21st May, attended by 700 delegates from 32 countries.

Swami Niranjan accompanied by Rishis Vivekananda and Hridayananda and Swami Sivamurti arrived at Venice to preside over the festival which was held at the Palazzo dei Congressi at Lido di Venezia. Swami Niranjan delivered illuminating lectures on 'Living Yoga' and conducted a memorable havan at the beach of Lido di Venezia. Over 350 aspirants received initiation into mantra, jignasu and karma sannyasa. During his stay, he was accompanied in a gondola tour of the channels of Venice and a visit to the Murano Island.

Later in the year, a Kriya Yoga course for Italian aspirants was conducted in Rikhia followed by a satsang program at Ganga Darshan.

2007

In 2007, programs of classes, lectures and seminars were conducted throughout the year including retreats and special seminars on the occasion of Navaratri in spring and autumn, and Guru Poornima celebrations. The programs were



attended by local students and aspirants from all over Italy.

The second edition of the book *Yoga Nidra* was reprinted and the book *Dhyana Yantras* was published in Italian.

Public lectures and seminars were held in Torino, Milano, Cormons, Trieste, Venice, Recanati and South Italy.

A Teacher Training Course and In-service Training for yoga teachers were conducted in Montescudo besides seminars on different topics.

A course on Nada Yoga was conducted at Rikhia in July. In November, a group of aspirants participated in the Sat Chandi Mahayajna at Rikhia and visited Ganga Darshan.

2008

Weekly classes increased at the ashram in Montescudo, delivered by other yoga teachers resident at the ashram. Lectures and seminars on different topics were organized and conducted throughout the year. Special programs of Mantra Sadhana and Yantra Drawing were conducted on the occasions of Navaratri and Guru Poornima.

Swami Anandananda conducted a seminar on Antar Mouna at Rikhia in July.

The second reprint of *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* was published in April followed by the book *Vivere lo Yoga* containing Swami Niranjan's lectures given during his visit to Italy.

Italian aspirants and devotees travelled to India to attend the Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Yoga Poornima celebrations held in Rikhia and satsang with Swami Niranjan at Ganga Darshan.



2009

In 2009, special programs were organized in Torino and at the ashram in Montescudo to contribute to the Annapoorna project in Rikhia.

Classes at the ashram were further increased offering different levels of classes.

The book *Four Chapters on Freedom* was published in Italian and *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* was reprinted in Italian.

Lectures and seminars were held in Torino, Milano and Molfetta.

In July, a group of students attended the Nada Yoga course held at Rikhia by Swami Anandananda and participated in the Guru Poornima celebrations.

In November, Italian aspirants and devotees participated in the Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Yoga Poornima celebrations held at Rikhia in the presence of Paramahamsaji.









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